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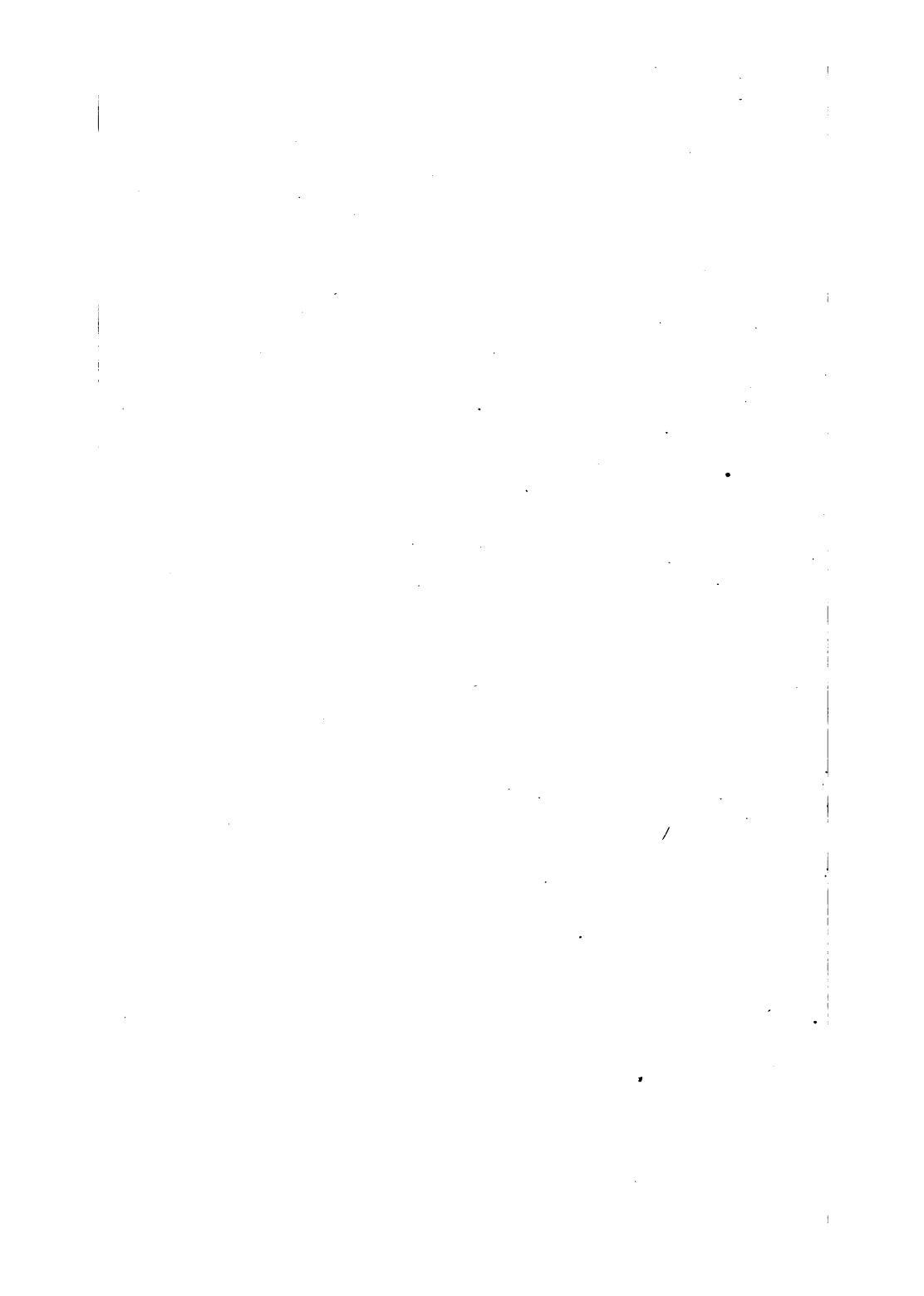
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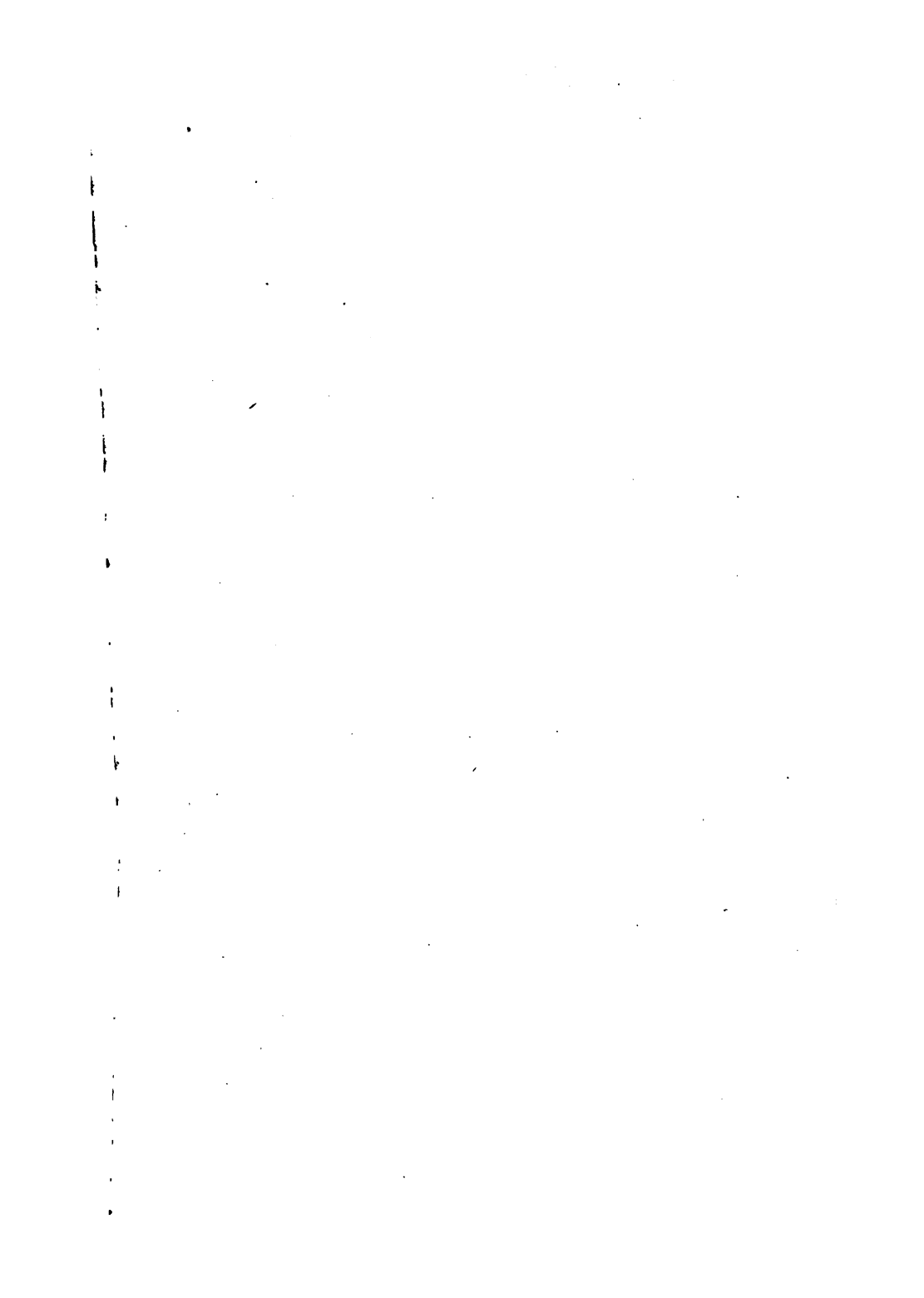


**FROM THE BEQUEST OF
JAMES WALKER
(Class of 1814)**

President of Harvard College

**"Preference being given to works in the Intellectual
and Moral Sciences"**





LUTHERANISM IN AMERICA:

AN ESSAY

ON

THE PRESENT CONDITION

OF THE

Lutheran Church in the United States.

BY

W. J. MANN, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN ST. MICHAEL'S AND KION'S
CONGREGATION, IN PHILADELPHIA.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS book has been written with a sincere desire to serve the Lutheran Church, and not a party in it. There is a work extant under the title of "The American Lutheran Church," &c., by the Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D. The material difference existing between the two will appear on a mere comparison of their respective titles. I endeavor to give a portraiture, not of the American Lutheran Church, but of the Lutheran Church in America, as it exists at the present time. I propose to describe the various prevailing tendencies, views, &c., which lay claim to the name Lutheran. The first step towards meeting the difficulties under which we are laboring, is properly to understand them. Some, perhaps, may think that I might have saved myself the trouble of giving a description of what is, in reality, before the eyes of all. I have no disposition whatever to forestall the reader's opinion about the book, nor undervalue his knowledge of the state of affairs in the Lutheran Church. But I would wish him to give it a fair and dispassionate perusal.

I also admit, that the title is not quite adequate to its contents. It is too narrow. I have often been obliged to go back to the past, in order to be able to throw more light on the present. To avoid making too large a book, I have in many instances only thrown out hints, where subjects might have been profitably enlarged upon. Of course, a great many things that form integral parts of the state of the Lutheran Church, in our day, have not received a place in this description, simply because they are of no peculiar interest.

My intention has not been to present a polemical work to the Lutheran public. I endeavored to confine myself, as much as possible, to facts, because about these there can be no dispute. Opinions, wherever I have expressed them, must stand on their own merits. I am very far from expecting a general consent to all my positions, but will be well satisfied if intelligent readers, here and there, will only be induced to think and reflect and examine for themselves those subjects which are of interest to them no less than to myself. Wherever I incidentally controvert the views expressed by others, it proves, that they with their opinions had interested, even where they did not convince me. I willingly subscribe to the following sentiment, expressed by the Rev. Dr. S. S. Schmucker, in the first chapter of his *American Lutheranism Vindicated*:—"Religious controversy, though it often degenerates from that calm

and dignified character which it should ever sustain, as a mutual search after truth, seems sometimes to be necessary and proper."

Some, perhaps, may be of opinion that I should have discussed, more minutely, the views of those who object to some parts of our Augsburg Confession, on the ground of its being tainted with error. Those I refer to a small work, under the title of "A Plea for the Augsburg Confession," which treats on that subject. The position taken there, I still maintain. I have enlarged on some of those points in this work. To those who have neither time nor inclination for a fuller investigation of the Evangelical and Protestant character of the Augsburg Confession, it may be comforting to know, that already, in the same century in which the Reformation occurred, a Jesuit by the name of Herman Tyreus instituted a searching inquiry into the character of that celebrated document, and found in it no less than six thousand deviations from the orthodox faith, and two thousand irregularities. The whole document will hardly contain as many words. This proves, that it gave very little satisfaction on the other side. It did not give any on that glorious 25th of June, 1530, when it was first delivered before Charles V, at the Diet of Augsburg.

For the English garb of the book the public is indebted to my beloved and esteemed colleague in our ministerial charge, the Rev. G. A. Wenzel, to whom our

thanks are due for the faithful and skilful manner in which he has succeeded in translating my German manuscript into English.

May the Giver of all Good add his blessing to these our humble labors, that they may become instrumental in advancing the interests of his kingdom on earth.

W. J. MANN.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 1856.

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THE PRESENT CONDITION
OF THE
Lutheran Church in the United States.

It cannot have escaped the notice of the attentive observer of passing events in the religious world, that the Lutheran Church is, at present, laboring under the influence of a very peculiar excitement, both in Germany and America. In Germany, we behold her earnestly protesting against, and stoutly opposing that union with the Reformed, which not a few had already begun to regard as triumphantly and permanently established; she has been suddenly aroused to a lively consciousness of her peculiarities, is actively engaged in the work of carefully ridding her entire system of all foreign admixtures, manifests a decided and increasing preference for the religious views of her founders, and is endeavoring to re-establish, within herself, the customs and usages which formerly obtained in her worship and religious life; an undertaking in which she has been, we regret to say, with the aid of the secular authorities, in certain localities, eminently successful. In diverting, however, our attention from that country to our own, and examining her condition here, we will find her scarcely more tranquil; and it is well worth our while to endeavor to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with those questions which are

agitating the minds of her members, and those party tendencies, which are daily making themselves more and more felt. The determination of these questions, and the triumph or defeat of these tendencies, must also determine the bearing of Lutheranism as a distinct organization on the Church in general; and as the history of Protestantism is inseparably connected with the history of the Lutheran Reformation, every Protestant has abundant reason to regard with interest and attention the gradual development of this particular Church.

If we take the external condition of the Lutheran Church in the United States into consideration, viewing her wide extension, her German origin, and the numerical strength of her membership, we cannot avoid the conclusion that, aided by only partially favorable circumstances, she might have exerted an important influence on the religious life and theology of this country, by at least acting, by the side of the German Reformed, the part, and performing the office of a mediator between these two different elements. This conclusion is warranted by the fact, that she numbers already eight theological seminaries in this country, three of which are located east and five west of the Alleghanies; that her clerical register contains the names of more than one thousand ministers, and that her membership is subject to an uncommon increase, in consequence of that ceaseless tide of emigration, which continues to flow from the old country to this. To all this must be added, that many of her ministers have received a thorough classical education in one or other of our German universities; that most of these command a knowledge of both the German and English languages; and above all, that a most lively interest in German theology has been awakened in the minds of many among the English portion of this community.

If, however, it should after all appear that the Lutheran Church does not maintain that position, and exert that influence which, according to these considerations, she might do,

the true cause will, upon inquiry, be found, among others, in the following circumstances. The Lutheran Church has an historical claim to thousands of Germans who emigrate to this country, and who are to be found in immense numbers, particularly in its principal cities and towns. But of these, an exceedingly large majority being animated by a decidedly anti-christian spirit, who despise and hate the Church, much of that strength which should legitimately be employed in her service, has not only been withdrawn from her, but is actually employed in violent opposition to her. It is sufficient here, simply to remind the reader, that there is not, in our larger cities, on an average, one German out of fifty, who is a regular attendant on the house of God, or who professes himself a member of the Church. In Germany, the government has taken all church affairs out of the hands of the people into its own, made them affairs of state, and thereby estranged the hearts of the people from the Church. There, the state-church hides the evil; but here, in this land of liberty, it comes to light. Another difficulty under which she has labored is found in her historical position. The Lutheran Church has been exposed to a succession of trying encroachments. Some of these, it is true, were unavoidable; but it is equally true, that, though productive of good in some few individual cases, their effect has been to enervate and dismember the Church. Among these may be mentioned, those violent and often unwisely conducted conflicts in reference to the German and English languages; also, those heterogeneous influences to which she has constantly been exposed from without, and that readiness, on her part, to accommodate herself to the prejudices and adopt the customs and usages of surrounding denominations, in consequence of which, she lost her own peculiarities, especially in doctrine and worship; whilst those points of difference, which distinguished her from other Christian associations, were gradually made to disappear. This has,

necessarily, alienated the affections of many of her people from her, whilst others found their connection with other churches not only facilitated but even justified thereby. Another difficulty, and one deserving of special mention, will be found in those disunionizing and schismatic tendencies which prevail within herself, and which require just now a thorough and impartial examination.

These internal dissensions among those who belong, at least nominally, to one and the same church, are, in our day, by no means merely confined to Lutherans. It is well known, that there are opposite parties among the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and in fact, among almost all Christian denominations, the Roman Catholics not excepted, where religious orders have, for centuries, carried on warfare amongst themselves, where proud and arrogant nations have contended for the papal crown, and where neither the spirit nor the liberty of Protestantism may be found.

In this respect, therefore, the Lutheran Church, in this country, presents the same feature which is to be found in others. But what constitutes the peculiarity of the differences existing within her limits, is the fact, that they are predominantly of a *dogmatical* and *confessional* character. They are not questions about church government; no, not even affecting Christian life or worship: questions which have heretofore been almost the principal causes of disunion, albeit, they are often incidentally drawn into the controversy; but it is the *Church's Confession*, that exposition of the sacred Scriptures, which the Church is either to adopt or reject; it is the rule of faith, around which contending parties are marshalling their forces. This it is, as all must readily perceive, which deeply affects her dearest interests, yea, imperils her very existence; this, too, makes the solution extremely difficult and important.

Equally peculiar will be found these party tendencies within the bosom of the Lutheran Church itself, on instituting a com-

parison between Germany and North America. In Germany there is, what may be termed, an extreme Lutheran party, who are making the most strenuous efforts to effect a dissolution of the existing Church-union, whilst a more conservative party regard it as a divine blessing, and profess to derive from it the only sure hope of a revival of the religious life of their fatherland. The union there is, with many Christians, who, in matters of faith, are essentially Lutheran, a question of conscience. But in America the case is entirely different. The more ultra Lutherans are, of course, here not included. But the New School Lutherans, who, though they have given up the distinctive doctrines of their own Church, and are, on that account, much more closely allied, in spirit, to other denominations, than to their own, are nevertheless altogether averse to and unprepared for a union.

But notwithstanding all this—notwithstanding they have inherited from their Lutheran home nothing but flesh and blood, and despite the fact, that in matters of faith they do feel themselves more at home among other denominations, they still cling to it with an affection which, in view of these circumstances, is truly astonishing and difficult to be accounted for. And yet, if we except the Evangelical Alliance, which, at best, is only a matter of secondary consideration, and in which only a few individual members of the Lutheran Church in America took an active part, no voice has been heard to advocate an organical connection with any other Church, however similar in doctrinal views. They are, in reality, just as much averse to amalgamate with other denominations, though upon different grounds, as the strictest symbolists.

We will, however, not anticipate a more distinct characterization of these dissimilar tendencies. But as it is desirable, for the better understanding of our subject, to consider each one separately, the whole may be conveniently divided into an *extreme left wing*, an *extreme right wing*, and a *centre*, with

the understanding, that these different parts stand connected by means of various degrees of shadings and transitions, and that, as is usual in such cases, a great variety of feathers of different hues are found in each wing, but especially in the centre.

PART FIRST.

THE LEFT WING—AMERICAN LUTHERANISM.

Here we find ourselves introduced to that party in the Lutheran Church, in the United States, which has adopted "American Lutheranism" as its watchword. This expression must, however, not be so interpreted as if signifying Lutheranism on American soil, but rather it is used to distinguish that modernized system, altered from the old, original German Lutheranism, and shaped and fashioned to suit the national genius of this country.

Foreigners might, indeed, fail to perceive this, but not those who are more intimately acquainted with America. It is a settled fact in the minds of a large majority of the Americans, that America is animated by an entirely new, peculiar, and more perfect political, social, and religious life. In this latter, religious life, with which we have principally to do, they regard their own as being far in advance of every other country—an opinion which neither the contradictory testimony of the actual condition of private and public life, nor, or rather far less, a more intimate acquaintance with the religious condition of Europe, will ever be likely to change. It is well known how often Europeans have been deceived in their first impressions of the showy piety of this country, until they were able to look below the surface, and make themselves acquainted with things as they really are.

The prominent character of Protestant piety in this country is, as is well known, Puritanic. The Puritans have put the impress of their energetic spiritual nature upon centuries and

generations. The strength of their system lies in its deep-toned moral earnestness, its weakness in a one-sided, extremely limited view in matters pertaining to religion; in consequence of which they look upon themselves as having attained the utmost limit of the purity of Christian doctrine and practice, whilst they reject, in the most summary manner, whatever either is really Romish, or by them supposed to be so. However strongly marked the points of difference between the primitive Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others, originally have been, or in many at present may be, and however dissimilar their forms, manner of worship, government and discipline, the practical religious spirit of all will be found substantially the same, and this is the prevailing spirit of American piety. But whatever may be said of the fanaticism, narrow-mindedness, bigotry, unevangelical legalism, superficiality in religious questions, and its rigorously nice, but, in the sight of God, utterly meritless, outward observances, whoever is acquainted with its mighty struggles, and whoever knows the important part it has played in the world's history, and the moral influence it has undoubtedly exerted on this country—taking into the account the social wants of republican life, which by recognizing the sovereignty of the law, is only supported by each one individually—will be exceedingly cautious in passing sentence on Puritanism.

This overpowering influence of Puritanism the Lutheran Church in America has also not escaped. The so-called American Lutheranism has its origin in the adoption of Puritanic views, as well as in giving up what was originally and peculiarly Lutheran in doctrine and worship.

What the condition of her *doctrinal basis* really is, has only latterly come fully to light, though concessions had all along been made, and much that was unlutheran received. This is most strikingly apparent in the "Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, published

by the General Synod, in the year 1820." In the preliminary principles of this formula no mention whatever is made of any of the confessional documents of our Church, nothing further being said than "that every individual is bound to receive this (the Old and New Testament) as his infallible rule of faith and practice, and to be governed by it." Only in chapters 18 and 19, which treat of the examination and licensure of candidates, and of ordination, allusion is made to a Confession, and an obligation imposed in the question, "Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?" In the constitution which the General Synod laid down for the government of the Theological Seminary it reads: "In this seminary shall be taught, both in the German and English languages, the fundamental doctrines of the sacred Scriptures, as they are set forth in the Augsburg Confession of Faith." We shall see hereafter, that the original representatives of the Lutheran Church in America, during the last century, would have been far from having regarded this as satisfactory. In the meantime, however, it may not be out of place to remind the reader, that expressions like these, uttered no farther back than thirty years ago, on the floor of the General Synod, were evidently far differently understood, from that extreme latitudinarian interpretation which is attempted to be forced upon them now. In the charge which, in 1826, was officially delivered by the Rev. D. F. Shaeffer, A.M., to Dr. S. S. Schmucker, on the occasion of his inauguration, as Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Gettysburg, the former speaks of the General Synod as "a grand and blessed institution of our Church," admonishes to the utmost liberality towards others, which he regards, in the present divided state of the visible Church, a solemn duty; "but the different genera and species should be preserved according to their peculiar nature." The speaker addresses previously

these remarkable words to the individual who at that time was to be inaugurated: "The Church which intrusts you with the preparation and formation of her pastors, demands of you (and in her behalf I solemnly charge you) to establish all students confided to your care in that faith which distinguishes our Church from others. If any should object to such faith, or any part of it, or refuse to be convinced of the excellence of our discipline, they have their choice to unite with such of our Christian brethren whose particular views in matters of faith and discipline may suit them better. I hold it, however, as indispensable, for the peace and welfare of a church, that unity of sentiment should prevail upon all important matters of faith and discipline among its pastors. Hence I charge you to exert yourself in convincing our students that the Augsburg Confession is a safe directory, by which to determine upon matters of faith contained in the sacred Scriptures." These are grave words, and full of wisdom.

But, notwithstanding sentiments like these occasionally found utterance, a wide-ranging latitudinarianism in doctrines gradually took the place of a stricter regard to the principles of Lutheran orthodoxy. Were we to define the *doctrinal character* of American Lutheranism, we could not call it Puritanic, for the Puritans were Calvinistic in *doctrine*; but among all the various doctrinal systems extant, it evidently resembles none more closely than that of the Swiss Reformer, Zwinglé.

Thus far, American Lutheranism has rested the matter by tacitly taking for granted, that the difference between essential and non-essential articles in the Augsburg Confession was in a measure clearly defined. In this sense are to be understood those vague expressions which we quoted above from official documents of the General Synod. Hence the dogma concerning the sacraments was classed with the non-essentials, and every one left at liberty to adopt, concerning them, what opinion might seem to him most satisfactory, though Christ,

the Lord, evidently established his Church on the *word and sacraments*, placing the two side by side, as of equal importance. Not till recently has American New Lutheranism considered it necessary to define its doctrinal position more distinctly. This was done in the "Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, &c.," in which is avowedly contained a statement of the views entertained by "American Lutherans, in accordance with the principles of the General Synod." The author of this recension of the Augsburg Confession is Prof. Dr. Schmucker, whose views, it is true, have long since been presented to the Christian community in works that have emanated from his pen, such as his *Popular Theology*, *Lutheran Manual*, and more especially his "*American Lutheranism Vindicated, &c.*, 1856," a work designed as a defence of the "Definite Platform."

Dr. Schmucker is manifestly the most learned representative of American Lutheranism. His writings show him to be a man of very extensive reading, and one, who has made himself acquainted at least with the learned arguments on both sides of the question. He is fond of citing in his writings, especially when treating on difficult points, the different opinions of a number of authors, as if thereby intending to submit the subject to the reader's decision, which in fact is, however, by no means the case, if the reader will take the author's own authority as his guide, one of whose favorite sayings is: "The majority of American Lutheran theologians has decided this matter either so or so;" then follows a catalogue of the names of a number of very excellent and pious men; and when, finally, Dr. Schmucker has added his own opinion, no one will dispute his right to being ranked, as far as theological knowledge is concerned, as a *primus inter pares*. It is true, he makes no more pretension than these authorities do to a profound, scrutinizing disquisition of the bearings of difficult theological questions, nor does he investigate the meaning of the original text with

he accuracy of a linguist, nor possess that fertility in originality which is ever active in discovering new aspects of dogmatical questions.*

He treats subjects in a popular manner, and adapts his writings to the common sense of the multitude in that style of Supernaturalism, that more edificatory than strictly scientific style of theological literature which almost universally pervades English theology. Consequently, in perusing Dr. Schmucker's writings on difficult points in theology, one feels almost inclined to wonder, why other profound scholars should expend so much time and research in the investigation and elucidation of points which by him are so summarily disposed of, as perfectly simple.

In proof of these assertions, it is only necessary to refer the reader, in addition to Dr. Schmucker's own productions, to several polemical works of other theologians, which have lately made their appearance in answer to some of his productions, such as the "Scriptural Character of the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by the Rev. H. J. Schmidt, D.D., Prof., &c., 1852;" and "The Broken Platform, by Rev. J. N. Hoffman, 1856." And also those ever-valuable articles, prepared by the late Professor Hartmann, a fine linguist and very learned theologian, originally from Wurtemberg, in reference to Dr. Schmucker's article in the *Evangelical Review*, 1851, IX. Vide *Kirchenfreund*, 1852, March, &c., "On the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper." Dr. Schmucker has been accused of being less of an orthodox Lutheran now,

* The Doctor, as far as we know, enters more fully into a philological and exegetical illustration of the question, connected with the subject, in his Article on the Saviour's presence in the Eucharist, than in any other of his works. But he mainly reasserts, what Zwinglé and his followers have up to this day broached against the Lutheran doctrine, and the former objections against such an exegesis are still valid. (Vide *American Luth. Church*, 1850, p. 120, &c.)

than formerly. In some few minor points this may possibly be the case; still, in the main, we believe that he entertained the same views and opinions thirty years ago, when he was chosen Professor of Gettysburg Theological Seminary, which he is known to entertain now; notwithstanding the well-known fact, that he formerly stood forth in the defence of that same Confession, by asserting its authority as the Lutheran Symbol, which he now wishes to see altered, and purged of supposed errors therein contained; a measure, by the way, which, if carried out, would also make an alteration in the General Synod's basis, which has hitherto left the Augsburg Confession untouched, absolutely and indispensably necessary. See "American Lutheranism Vindicated," p. 166. Those important revolutions in German theology, brought about during the last forty years, in opposition to that rationalism which formerly prevailed, and is, in certain quarters, still prevailing, and distinguished, to a large extent, by a strong influence of the principles laid down in the Confession of the Lutheran Church, could not, in the interim, have produced a material change in his views. He received his theological training at a Presbyterian seminary. There his mind was impressed with, and his views shaped by, the reformed doctrines, and in this condition he took up the Augsburg Confession; under the influence of that bias which education had given to his mind, he interpreted and commented upon it, acted as Professor of a Theological Seminary for thirty years, instructed the youths confided to his care, and influenced the minds of those who read his works.

To discuss the doctrinal views of American Lutherans separately would lead us too far. We have already above referred to its dogmatical stand-point, and declared it essentially Zwinglean. In proof of this assertion we need only direct the reader's attention to the following points, taken from Dr. Schmucker's published writings, where he cannot fail to perceive

how plainly he departs from the Lutheran Confession. This is more especially the case with the dogma concerning the *Sacraments*. Dr. Schmucker's views on this subject may easily be determined from the proposition he lays down, namely, that the observance of the Sacraments is of far less importance than that of the moral law of the Gospel. (See Lutheran Manual, 1855, p. 135.) It is, of course, not our province here to review such an assertion. The Lutheran dogma concerning baptism, which declares it the water of regeneration, is classed among other supposed errors of the Augsburg Confession, and in the "Definite Platform," expressly rejected. (See p. 29, ff.) Likewise the doctrine, that we obtain, in the Holy Supper, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. (See Def. Platf., p. 27.) Also, that concerning the mystical presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and its reception by the communicant. (L. c., p. 39.) Also, the Lutheran doctrine concerning the *Communicatio Idiomatum* of both natures in the glorified God-man. (L. c., p. 35.)

However, this will suffice to show how much violence our Lutheran system has suffered in its adaptation to that of Zwinglé. We can truly say, that the Lutheran Church, in accommodating itself to and adopting the prevailing religious views of Congregationalists and Presbyterians, has, with the exception of but few points, such as, for instance, the doctrine on Predestination, in which Dr. Schmucker favors Zwinglé also more than Calvin, surrendered the specific peculiarities of her own Confession.

These transformations of Lutheran doctrines among American Lutherans are also sometimes ascribed to the influences of Puritanism, which is, however, not strictly true. This has, in reality, exerted its power more particularly upon the *spirit of piety*, upon *Christian life*, its morality and *forms of worship*. The effects of this influence are everywhere apparent.

To the influence of Puritanism it must be ascribed that the

"Definite Platform" places the view of the Augsburg Confession concerning the Christian Sabbath, which is most undoubtedly that of the New Testament, among the "Errors," and contends, that the requirements of the law of the Old Testament must be transferred to the Christian Sabbath, in which case the change from Saturday, which was the divinely appointed day, to Sunday, might create a difficulty not very easy of solution. From their Puritanic stand-point, the American Lutherans further accuse the Augsburg Confession of favoring the "Romish Mass," classing it among the so-called "five errors." Likewise, Private Confession as yet in use among some of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches; so also, the custom of Exorcism in baptism, which, however, was never brought into general use in the Lutheran Church. We, however, refer the reader, in reference to all these points, to Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession, where he may see for himself how much evangelical liberty is granted. To the influence of Puritanism certainly must be attributed the absence, in most of our Lutheran churches and worship in this country, of all those forms by which she is in Europe distinguished from the Reformed. In many places we find instead of the altar simply a table; instead of the gown and bands, a plain black coat; no baptismal font, no crucifix, no paintings, much less the symbol of light, frequently no steeple, no bells; in short, everything which is supposed to have the least leaning towards Romish custom or superstitions, however innocent, appropriate, and beautiful in itself, is carefully excluded. Everything is tried by the spiritualizing rule of reason, and subjected to the plummet of the purest, most exact, sanctimonious utility, before being adopted. On this account, and also because individual will and taste strongly predominate, we find but few traces of liturgies; all prayer is to be extemporaneous; singing is not engaged in by the congregation at large;* the old

* It must, however, be set down to the credit of the Lutheran Ob-

German chorals have not been transferred to the worship of our American Lutheran Churches. These have introduced the idyllion melodies used among the English, in which the objective character retires just as much before the subjective expression of feeling, as is the case with most English hymns when compared with the great German Church-hymn. In consequence of a change of views concerning the importance of the Sacraments, the institution of sponsors has also been diverted from its primitive signification. During the celebration of the Lord's Supper the emblems are in many places distributed among the communicants in their pews, which always appeared to us very unbecoming. Even the old appointed church festivals have been discontinued. Catechisation is no longer required as a standing part of religious exercises, is no longer treated in our theological seminaries as a distinct branch of study, and in place of catechumenical instruction, "revival seasons" are periodically gotten up, on which occasions it not unfrequently happens that many, entirely destitute of a knowledge of the order of salvation, get the notion of "getting religion."

One reason, among many, why we are not surprised at the overpowering influence which Puritanism has exerted over Lutheranism is, because from it the *religious life* of the Lutheran Church in this country has, for the last fifty years, received its main impulse. Puritanism, itself, is much less theory than life, activity and effect. This, its strength, it at one time exhibited in a spirit of fanaticism towards everything Romish, as against everything Antichristian in a special sense. It has conquered the ground it occupies, and endeavors to maintain it in the New World. During the last century it found an ally in Methodism. This is so closely related to it, that it only carries out the Puritan principle by combating server, that he has from time to time raised just complaints against this evil.

Antichrist not only in the Romish Church, but in the world generally; and, like it, its nature is ascetic. With the exception of some few matters pertaining to church organization, they agree with one another most admirably. What Puritanism in doctrine and worship rejects as unchristian, Methodism rejects likewise; whilst the mode and manner in which the Methodist incites to religious life is, in turn, not at all foreign to the Puritan. This Puritanic-Methodistic-English Protestantism has most powerfully influenced the English portion of the Lutheran Church in this country. For it cannot be denied, that it was instrumental in reanimating the Church to a certain extent. "American Lutheranism" has, in its way, been active in the promotion of the Kingdom of God, in the founding of literary institutions, seminaries and colleges, in building up the denomination, in promoting home and foreign missions, in supporting general religious interests, such as Sunday-schools, the organization of new congregations, and in opposing Romanism in the Puritanic sense of that term.

In all these it has been alive and active. Its ministers are, however, not expected to make themselves masters of a thorough classical education, or, as is the case in Germany, go through a regular course of philosophical training, neither is it considered necessary, that they should possess a large amount of theological learning; on which account the fewest number of them have acquired even a superficial acquaintance with our Symbolical books. They have, indeed, no idea how much they might learn from them, and if they would take the pains to study them thoroughly and with a careful reference to the Word of God, many a prejudice would be obliged to give way to a grateful recognition.* Many of these have been educated either under Dr. Schmucker himself, or under those who had received their theological training from him.

* We are here reminded of what Tertullian says in his Apology: C. I, of the *causa Christiana*: *unum gestit, ne ignorata damnetur*.

And it is not to be denied that a goodly number of them are faithful and efficient men, who engage, with a hearty goodwill and a self-denying spirit, in whatever they regard as conducive to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom; and yet they cannot be admitted as competent judges in reference to those questions which now agitate the Church, simply because they have hitherto only seen and heard one side. There is no doubt that with some of them the suspicion has been aroused, and is gradually gaining ground, that "American Lutheranism," by having incorporated into its system those very doctrines which Luther and his illustrious coadjutors so stoutly opposed, is occupying rather an awkward position. A spirit of inquiry as to what the doctrines of the Lutheran Church really are has gone forth. It may be that modern German religious literature has influenced some in that direction. At all events, it is a significant sign of the times, that the "Definite Platform," which was designed as a sort of Symbolical book for American New Lutheranism, fell far short of meeting with that cordial and general approval which the author and his immediate friends had probably expected. Moreover, the views of some of the adherents of "American Lutheranism," in reference to the means of promoting spiritual life, have undergone no inconsiderable change. It is true, protracted meetings are still continued to be held, reports of revivals, according to Methodist custom, are still in high favor with some, new measures have not altogether outlived themselves, and there is still a prevailing disposition to fall in with whatever is, for the time being, popular, as is evidenced by the Kossuth and other excitements being made the frequent topics of pulpit oratory. Yet many extravagancies have been discontinued, a more sober judgment, in the choice of the means for promoting religion—the effects of which were often only too specious—is beginning to be exercised. In many things they are evidently returning to the good old ways.

Thorough and systematic instruction of the young, in the truths of the Christian religion, hand-in-hand with the influences of a careful religious training, in our schools and families, is the only solid way of building up the Church. In connection with this, it is worthy of special mention, that there is a large portion of our *lay-members* who, under the influence of their respective ministers, naturally sympathize with American Lutheranism, manifest a very active interest in the affairs, cares, enterprises, and conflicts of the Church. They love their Church in sincerity, are liberal in the promotion of religious and benevolent objects, and deservedly enjoy as much esteem in public life as the members of any other denomination. They desire to see religion manifest its influence on private and public life, and on all our social and domestic relations, in the true American spirit, which, it must be confessed, does not always keep itself confined within proper limits. Though it is true, that with the exception of one Synod, which, in consequence of its political tendencies, was not received by the General Synod into its connection, the slave question and other distinct party interests have hitherto not been made subjects of public discussion in the Lutheran Church, save the cause of temperance and the use of the Bible in our public schools, which are questions coming more within the scope of the pulpit. Laymen often push their ministers in such matters unduly forward, and thus place them in a position utterly irreconcilable with their office. The great danger consists in that prevailing disposition which readily falls in with every popular movement, as long as it is popular—which is sometimes not very long—and to draw down religion to the stand-point of worldly utilitarianism, whereby the dignity of religion, the Church, and the holy office of the ministry is invariably lowered.

From what we have thus far said, it may readily be perceived what spirit pervades American New Lutheranism. What has

been alleged in regard to Puritanism, is equally applicable to it, namely, it is full of energy, and adapts itself to common sense and practical utility, but is, at the same time, also irritable, excitable, inflammable, and prone to exaggerate whatever idea it may lay hold of, as the Methodistical excitements during the last half century abundantly prove. The German element of *Innigkeit* and *Gemuethlichkeit* has almost entirely disappeared. Americanism has absorbed it, as well as in this large branch of the Lutheran Church in this country, north and south, east and west, the German language has almost entirely disappeared. Its piety has assumed the character of English Protestantism,—it is legal; the performance of certain religious duties, such as keeping the Sabbath, and the like, are strenuously insisted upon, and the main stress laid on external conduct generally. It is true, God is not often spoken of from Lutheran pulpits, as he is from those of Calvinists, where “the Lord” often causes “the Father” to be lost sight of, yet the Gospel is rather received as a “nova lex” (new law); religion is there regarded as a work, a task to be performed, a service faithfully to be accomplished. On these things, the main stress is laid. In German evangelical piety an opposite, and no less one-sided tendency, predominates: here, religion is enjoyment; the soul’s calm sabbatical rest; the elevation of the mind to an ideal view of life; the leisure hour of the inner man for intellectual contemplation, a foretaste of future blessedness, only an imaginary life, which possesses not sufficient vitality to subject self to a strict discipline, and thus give some striking visible manifestations of its existence, by outwardly exhibiting its power and energy. It is like a treasure hid in a napkin, not indeed without inherent value, but practically without profit, both to the possessor and those around him. In this there is great danger of an abuse of evangelical liberty; in the other, and wherever else Protestantism is infected with Puritanism and carried to extremes by it, there is danger of

regarding legal performances as meritorious, becoming self-righteous, and falling into hypocrisy. The German attaches too much importance to internal experience, to his individual consciousness, and hence possesses too little church-interest, congregational feeling, and too little concern as to what influence his conduct may exert upon others. The Puritan, on the contrary, is too prone to attach too much importance to his honorable, upright standing in the Christian community, and draws the dividing line between the righteous and the wicked too much from external and superficial appearances. That many truly pious souls are to be found among both parties, who are well aware of the dangers to which those inclining to either extreme expose themselves, and who are, on that account, striving to keep themselves guarded against it, needs no proof.

But from what has already been mentioned, it will appear that "American Lutheranism" is also something new, if compared with the spirit and life of the Lutheran Church in Germany; a fact which sufficiently accounts for the want of sympathy on the part of American Lutherans with German Lutheran affairs. They are not sufficiently aware of their historical connection with Germany. Besides, they justly regard, with indignation and disgust, the existing church establishment of that country. What they usually hear of the condition of religious life in Germany, is not calculated to inspire them with respect for it. The German Sunday, with its theatrical performances, parades, and other similar exhibitions,—things to them great stumbling-blocks,—fills them with so much aversion, and excites their prejudices to such a degree, that they find it very difficult to appreciate what is really good in the Lutheran Church of the Old Fatherland.

Here too is the place to say something in reference to the *Organs of "American Lutheranism."* It is true, among these may, in a certain sense, be reckoned all publications,

seminaries, and synods engaged in the service of this party. Yet we understood by them, more especially those *public papers* which, existing within the bounds of the denomination, have made it their special business to defend the principles and promote the interests of New School Lutheranism. Of these, there are several. One of them, which was formerly published in Springfield, Ohio, has lately been discontinued, and blended its interests with those of the Lutheran Observer. The Lutheran Observer, edited, at present, by Rev. B. Kurtz, D.D., in Baltimore, must be regarded as the most important organ of American New Lutheranism. It has already been in existence some thirty years; is the joint property of several clergymen, and affords a most striking proof of how great an influence a religious paper may be made to exert upon the Church, even in cases where it is only the private property of a few individuals. It is said, the Observer has some 10,000 subscribers. In accordance with this, its actual readers may be put down at 50,000, on the formation of whose judgment, in reference to whatever questions may come up before the Church, it exerts, each coming week, a renewed influence. The Lutheran Observer is the open and avowed advocate of the principles, views, and tendencies of the American Lutheran party. It has especially raised its standard in favor of the mutilation of the Augsburg Confession, as proposed by Dr. Schmucker in his "Definite Platform," and opposes the true Lutheran dogma concerning the holy sacraments, and other long-established doctrines and usages of the Lutheran Church, if possible, in a more popular manner than even Dr. Schmucker himself. It seems to be of opinion, that the Augsburg Confession has lasted long enough; that three hundred years is altogether a sufficiently advanced lifetime for any Confession; nay, the Observer speaks sometimes in such a manner, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, that it would be heartily glad if there were no Confessions at all. The Bible alone is

enough, and sufficiently plain. However, rigid consistency does not appear to be one of the strong points of the Observer. Yet, upon the whole, it may rest assured, that even its enemies will not fail to award to it the honor of being a *right smart fellow*. In its weekly visits to its readers, it is never remiss in bringing them something interesting and attractive, which, if it be not its love, it may be its hatred,—and the Observer is a good hater;—if it should not be grave, it may be humorous; in all of which, it cannot fail to find favor, even with those who have not passed through a revival. Here we find the usual amount of church intelligence, following it, an affecting catalogue of editorial groans; now and then, conscientious admonitions by the accountant; then again, some caustic remarks by the Editor, on exciting questions of the day, varied occasionally with moving Jeremiads about the great scarcity of revivals, which is again speedily followed up by an announcement of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit, during this or that protracted meeting, on which occasion, such ministers, as have been particularly active, do not neglect to apprise the Church, sometimes, through the columns of the Observer, of the signal victory achieved by light over darkness.

Of course the different questions that agitate the Church are also not lost sight of, and, during these polemical discussions, some pretty heavy blows are at times dealt out, as may be satisfactorily shown by a reference to some of its later issues; but, though some few took exception to this, it nevertheless seems to suit the taste of the party, for the Observer indulged in public rejoicings at the increase of his subscribers. Of course he unites in the popular outcry about Antipopery with might and main, and whoever refuses to chime in with him is at once regarded with suspicion. Yet withal it cannot be denied, that he is, on the whole, sincere in his claim to piety. His columns are often filled with articles of a devotional and practical character, taken, in part, from other religious papers,

and vital piety is strenuously urged. In this sense must also be understood those side-thrusts which are ever and anon levelled against the "Lutheran heresies," concerning baptismal regeneration, the real presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist,—which the Observer never tires upbraiding with consubstantiation,—Liturgical services, Responses, and the like. However, perhaps the Observer does not understand these things any better. But, lest the desire for such strong meat might become too great, the contents are varied, by either introducing, here or there, some droll and ludicrous anecdote, or an article pampering national pride. From all this it is easy to see, that the Observer does not lack variety; on the contrary, it is really entertaining, spicy, and racy; and yet we have by no means exhausted the almost endless catalogue of its contents. And this is the weekly religious paper which has hitherto been more extensively read by the members of the Lutheran Church in this country than any other. And, though only private property, it has gained great power in the Lutheran Church. It has been, in connection with Dr. Schmucker's writings, the strongest weapon ever employed in this country against the old original Lutheran doctrines, and this fact imparts to it its historical importance. No other similar periodical within the Lutheran Church in the United States can, thus far, in point of influence, at all compare with it.

Here also is the proper place to say something in regard to the General Synod, especially because some of the most influential representatives of American Lutheranism wish it to be regarded as the strongest bulwark against the more strictly Lutheran tendency. The General Synod is composed of delegates, elected in proportionate numbers by the District Synods in its connection. These number at present between 20 and 30, among which some, however, are numerically very small. It is not a legislative, but rather an advisory body for

the Church. It has the chief superintendence of the Seminary at Gettysburg, of the Lutheran Home and Foreign Missions, and provides the books used in divine worship. The General Synod affords ample proof that the American Lutheran Church, or New School Lutheran party, has, in a manner, recognized the departure from the letter and spirit of the old Lutheran Church. We have already had occasion to direct attention to the relation which the Formula for the government and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, adopted by the General Synod, bears to the Confession of the Lutheran Church. It not only passes by the collective body of the Symbolical books, requiring none of its ministers to subscribe to them, but even grants liberty of interpretation and comment in regard to the Augsburg Confession itself. In the second part of that Formula, where, in § 2, it treats of the *visible Church*, no allusion whatever is made to the Church's Confession, the Bible alone being mentioned as the juridical code, just as if all Christendom was perfectly in the clear, and altogether unanimous in its interpretation. The General Synod has also published a Liturgy and Hymn Book. But it seems as if that body had not presumed on a regular use of the Church's Prayer Book, there being, as far as our knowledge extends, scarcely any New Lutheran congregations in which, if we except the reading of the Confession of Sins, the custom of using the Liturgy prevails. Since then, the Lutheran Church, like the Episcopalian, was from the beginning *liturgical*, yet without intending thereby to exclude extemporaneous prayer, either from her public or private worship, the New Lutheran tendency in the United States has also in this respect, if not indeed exclusively sanctioned, at least tacitly permitted the Puritanic custom, of using none but extemporaneous prayer to prevail in its own Church. It is much to be deplored that some leading and influential men in connection with this party have cast the blame of Romanizing abuse

upon Liturgical responses and Antiphonies, though most unquestionably used under the Old Testament dispensation. They also originally entered largely into the public service of the primitive Lutheran Church, infusing new life into its congregational service, and making it a truly cheerful and vigorous adoration before the throne of grace.

But it is just within the bosom of the General Synod, where, at this very time, a great divergency in opinion concerning Church matters and Lutheranism exists. The impression is gaining ground among our ministers and laity that the Lutheran Church has an individual character in regard to Church usages and Confession, and that this character she ought not to forfeit. There is an increasing conviction that the Lutheran Church only shows its weakness by becoming the sport of Puritanical and Methodistical religious tendencies. Many of our older and younger ministers are actively engaged in searching out the original doctrines of the Lutheran Church, whose confessional documents are again beginning to command that respect they so eminently merit, and the conviction is gradually forcing itself upon the mind of the Church, that the arguments of old Lutheran theologians need not fear to encounter those brought forward by the friends and followers of Zwinglé. Nay, out of the dread of this newly-awakened life of the old Lutheran faith, the existence of which can no longer be disputed, has originated the plan to change the Augsburg Confession so as to agree with the New Lutheran Puritanic view. But the "Definite Platform" has, for a number of reasons, failed to find that general approval, even in the General Synod, which its author had felt himself justified to anticipate.

PART SECOND.

THE RIGHT WING—THE LUTHERANS OF A STRICTLY
SYMBOLICAL TENDENCY.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS—LUTHER—HIS CHARACTER.

THE Lutheran Church, from the time of her origin, stood forth in decided opposition, not only to the Romish Church, but equally so to all the religious parties that were, at that time, forming around her. In other words, she had, from the beginning, a character of her own. Wittenberg set Rome at defiance, but could not, in many things, stretch out its hand either to Geneva or Zurich. The Lutheran Church formed her peculiarities in doctrine and in the arrangement and management of her worship at a very early day. Nor was the formation of her peculiar character at all the result of mere accident, but she assumed it in her numerous conflicts with the other Protestant parties, not less than with the Papists.

No one attacked Popery more courageously and openly than Luther. No one opposed it more triumphantly, no one had been armed from above with greater power for the conflict than he; and there was not one who could compare with him in that incalculable influence which he swayed over millions of the subjects of the Papal throne, as an author, teacher of theology, preacher, sacred poet, and especially as the translator of the Holy Scriptures. He was not merely urged on in his strife by a sense of righteous indignation at the awful corruption, profligacy, and deep degradation of the Romish clergy, and by a justifiable anger at the gross neglect which the misguided and oppressed flock of Jesus Christ suffered at the hands of perfidious hirelings; he battled for the truth of the Gospel with an eagerness with which a man only battles for his life; for salvation in Christ, free Grace without the least

personal merit had given himself the life. He knew that the blood of Christ is the life-giving fountain of the New Testament, and there it was where he had again found, after many deplorable and useless wanderings in the labyrinth of Popish ordinances, penances, meritorious works, outward gestures, and internal anguish of conscience, the lost paradise for his heart. He knew that the complete salvation of the world was concentrated in this one word: God was made manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world unto himself. This idea of the infinite love of God in Christ, the fundamental principle of God's revelation to man, the centre in the kingdom of God, was also the centre of all Luther's thoughts, and this idea contrasts most strongly with whatever, in the Popish system, is founded on legalism and the merit attributed to human works.

But this same Luther, who knew a thousand times better, why he called the Papacy the Antichrist, than thousands of those who now repeat it after him, was very far from consenting to everything, simply on the ground of its being anti-popish, and thus letting loose a spirit of wanton liberty, which would have been just as dangerous as the hitherto existing death-dealing servitude under which they were groaning. No one regretted it more deeply, that the Reformation was instrumental in producing a split in the Church, than Luther; and we, at this distant day, are utterly unable to conceive how severely the hearts of Luther, Melancthon, and all the other Reformers, were exercised in reference to this point. It was not Luther's wish to found a new Church, but only to purify and restore the old. And in his attempt to accomplish this, he did not go to work with the impetuosity and violence of a fanatical revolutionist, but like one who did not wish to demolish more than what, by the clear light of the sacred Scriptures, he had learned to distinguish as the devil's workmanship on the temple of God; and wherever these enjoined upon him the obedience of faith, he was inflexible, and proof alike against the assaults of friend and foe; and as for false

liberty, which is so strongly inclined to accommodate the revelation of God to human reason, he never either advocated, or in the remotest degree countenanced. Luther exhibits, in his whole character, every one of those features that have ever marked the man of true greatness. In him were found combined wise moderation with indomitable courage, noble self-command with the most untiring energy, original and powerful ideas, with a decidedly conservative tendency.

Such was the man after whom millions, both in the Old and New World, call themselves, whenever they wish to designate their faith as differing from that of other Christian Confessions. And he, as the father of the Lutheran Church, has imprinted upon it the stamp of his own originality. True, he did not possess the power of compelling others to think as he did on the subject of religion; and if he had, he, among all others, would have been the last to have employed it. Yet, if his thoughts had not forced overpowering conviction on the minds of thousands, the Lutheran Church would never have existed. She became, in the natural course of events, the very image of Luther's own peculiarities. He has been called not only the greatest, but the most German German. He was both. And this must not be lost sight of, when we reflect that the Lutheran doctrines and Church met with their most cordial reception, and found their most permanent home, among the purer Germanic nations. Luther thought, felt, lived, as a man of the highest order of what we may call Germanic genius. He was penetrative by intuition, and at the same time possessed of an uncommon share of good, sound, practical sense, childlike and simple, kind and benevolent, full of dignified and energetic hatred wherever he found the devil at work, immovable when God's truth and honor were at stake; besides, he was richly endowed with a variety of talents. He was theologian and philologist, the man who gave to the Germans a new religion and a new language; he was counsellor to the Church and to the state; the first in the pulpit, and not

the least among those who tune their harps to the praise of God. These various parts united formed a harmonious whole, in which each individual attribute is fitted to the other in beautiful proportion. Luther was particularly alive to the beautiful. He had a happy artistic taste, and desired to see the beautiful employed along with the true and good, in the service of God, who endowed men with such a variety of talents for these things. For this reason, he delighted in a union of the arts with religion and the Church. In this he was no Puritan, for it was his desire that the beautiful should be employed in the service of God, and sanctified by religion. He well knew, that the secularizing of the arts is productive of mischief to the Church, but that by means of them, religious truth may be symbolically exhibited, and a spirit of devotion, in various ways, promoted, provided they are not permitted to sustain any other relation than that of servant to religion. On this account, Luther retained many of those beautiful and solemn usages which had prevailed in the Catholic Church, almost from time immemorial. Moreover, he was conservative, and did not wish to run from one extreme into the other, as many fanatically inclined individuals in his time had done, and whose melancholy example, with its disastrous consequences, he had before his eyes. He simply aimed at dispelling those Romish superstitions which had attached themselves to what was in itself useful and beautiful, and then regulate the service of the sanctuary, in every essential, in accordance with the pure Word of God, and thus make it a service in spirit and in truth.*

* According to this must be decided those ignorant accusations which represent Luther as having retained the ceremonies of the Romish mass, private confession, &c., in compliance with Rome. The United States of America might, with equal propriety and justice, be called a monarchy, because the executive power of the government is vested in a single individual. On the mass see Apol. Conf. Aug. de Voce Missa. We shall hereafter have occasion to return to this subject.

The Lutheran Church has, from the beginning, drawn a correct line of demarcation between the essentials and non-essentials in Christianity. What she regards as essential is the true doctrine concerning salvation, and genuine faith in this doctrine; this concerns our immortal souls. Here are at stake the unadulterated and unabridged truths of the Word of God. The other, such as forms of worship, external regulations, Church government, and the like, are non-essential in reference to our salvation. As regards these, evangelical liberty may be used, according as time or circumstances require it, provided nothing be done contrary to the pure Word of God. To convince the reader how liberal the Lutheran Church acted in this, from the beginning, it is only necessary to refer him to the Augsburg Confession, where, in Art. XV, he may read as follows: "Concerning ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, we teach, that those may be kept, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the Church, such as certain solemnities, festivals, &c. Concerning matters of this kind, however, we maintain the principle, that the consciences of men should not be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation."

CHAPTER II.

THE PRIMITIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

ABOUT fifty years after the *Diet of Augsburg*, the internal formation of the Lutheran Church was substantially completed. No one can expect the formation of a new religious life, the reorganization of an ecclesiastical constitution, the adoption of a new Confession, the establishment of a new form of worship, to be brought about suddenly and with one stroke, as if by miracle. But within the space of those fifty years the development of the Confession and the doctrines of the Church had

arrived at a certain termination. The founders of the Lutheran Church had, during that time, very properly directed their chief attention to the accurate determination of the doctrines touching our salvation. But as regards public worship and Church government in general, no absolute uniformity was required.

1. THE SYMBOLICAL BOOKS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

The doctrines of the Lutheran Church are comprehended in her *Symbolical Books*, which, taken together, are denominated the Book of Concord. This contains:

A. The three ancient *Symbola Œcumenica*, namely, the so-called *Apostolic Symbol*, which is a very ancient enlargement of the form of baptism (Matt. 28 : 19); then the Nicene *Constantinopolitan Symbol*, from the years 325 and 381; and lastly the *Symbolum Quicunque*, or Athanasian, which, however, comes not from Athanasius.

B. The *Augsburg Confession*, as submitted June 25, 1530, at the Diet of Augsburg, to the Emperor Charles V, by the Lutheran princes and cities. This is the so-called *unaltered* Augsburg Confession; and is, in reality, the only one which can claim the authority and command the respect of a Symbolical Book. For in later editions Melancthon made, in several points, arbitrary alterations.

C. The *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, drawn up by Melancthon, is a refutation of the objections raised by the Romish theologians against the Augsburg Confession. If we reflect how unsettled theologians in general were, at that time, in their ideas concerning the meaning of the word *sacrament*, we will not be surprised to find that *absolution* was still called a *sacramentum*, if not so distinctly in the original German, at least in the Latin. So, also, Luther, in his Larger Catechism, calls penance a *sacramentum*. The confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, of a subsequent date, altogether refused to apply

the appellation of *sacramentum* to penance and absolution, and clearly defined the meaning of the word Sacrament.

D. The *Smalcald Articles*, which Luther had drawn up for the purpose of laying them before an ecumenical council expected to be called, and which, in 1537, were signed by the Lutheran theologians, at Smalcald. This document is a powerful polemic against the Romish heresies. Connected with it is an historical and canonical appendix, concerning the origin of the papal primacy and the jurisdiction of the bishops, drawn up by Melancthon, and also signed by the same theologians.

E. *Luther's two Catechisms*, the Larger and Smaller. A visitation of the Churches in Saxony had resulted in showing that the people were exceedingly ignorant in regard to the subject of religion, which induced Luther to prepare these two Catechisms, in 1528 and 1529, of which, especially the smaller one, has become emphatically the Symbolical Book of the laity, and to which many thousands owe the principal part of their religious instruction, as well as their insight into the principal doctrines of the sacred Scriptures.

F. The *Formula Concordiæ* (Form of Concord); the first complete authorized edition of which appeared in 1580, after having been drawn up in 1577, at the convent of Bergen, by a number of the most able theologians. It received forthwith the signatures of 53 princes, 35 cities, and about 9000 ministers, theological professors, teachers, &c. It is divided into two principal parts,—an Epitome and a Solida Declaratio. Its design was, as its Proæmium informs us, to settle certain differences of opinion that had sprung up among Lutheran theologians themselves, by the only rule of faith, the Word of God, and by these means lay down the doctrinal system of the Lutheran faith, in every essential, as distinguished from and opposed to both the Romish and Calvinistic. All the points in dispute are treated of in eleven articles, and always with the design of defending the Lutheran and refuting the opposite

views. The twelfth article treats of Anabaptists, Unitarians, and other heretical sects. It contains, besides, an appendix on the person and dignity of the God-man. The Form of Concord, frequently denominated in a special sense the Symbol of the theologians, is a masterpiece of the scientific exhibition and confirmation of the doctrines of the Christian religion.*

It would lead us much too far were we to undertake to explain here, one by one, the doctrines contained in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, or endeavor to prove their scriptural correctness. Those of our readers who have been instructed in Luther's Smaller Catechism are already sufficiently acquainted with the principal part of them. But what we call the peculiarities of the Lutheran creed, and of the religious life in the Lutheran Church, may be briefly brought to the reader's notice.

2. PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LUTHERAN CREED, AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

It is hardly necessary to inform the reader, that the doctrines of the Lutheran Church stand in direct and most decided opposition to the doctrines of the Romish Church. The main point consists in this,—that Lutherans are taught, by the doctrines of their Church, that the Romish Church knows nothing about the doctrine of reconciliation, in an evangelical sense; that a Romish Christian has in Christ, not a whole and all-sufficient Saviour, but must, by his own works, prepare for himself a way to heaven; and that, in consequence of this, it is impossible for true love to exist between God and man, because no complete reconciliation has been wrought out; that God, on that account, continues far from and a stranger to him, and he therefore stands in need of the intercession of the

* Those who wish to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with the development of the Lutheran doctrines, are referred to Dr. G. Thomasius's *Christi Person und Werk*.

saints, of sacrifices, penance, and similar aids. In the Romish Church, the Word of God is not regarded as the only fountain of Divine truth; the honor of Christ, and the merit of his sacrificial death, is degraded; human works and words are exalted, and instead of looking to the Spirit, who infuses the love of God into the heart, great importance is attached to many laws and institutions of men, and the kingdom of God is secularized in outward ceremonies. In all this, the conscience finds no real comfort and peace; and where true faith is wanting, where implicit confidence in the free grace of God in Christ is wanting, it never can come so far, that man ceases to be something within himself, that grace may abound in him.*

But the Lutheran Church does not only, in her teachings, stand forth in direct and distinct opposition to all this, and especially to many other dogmas unalterably determined by the *Council of Trent*, she also disagrees with Zwinglé and Calvin on many important points. Among these may be instanced *Calvin's doctrine concerning Predestination*. The latter maintains, that the *Decretum Dei absolutum* irrevocably predeter-

* We are astonished to see that the Rev. Dr. Schmucker seems to favor in this point the Romish doctrine of co-operation, on man's part, as necessary to his salvation; for we cannot give any other interpretation to the following extract from his "American Lutheranism Vindicated," page 125, viz.: "Consequently, without a new birth, an entire moral renovation, in which the rebel lays down the arms of his rebellion, and the slave of sin is delivered from the dominion of his depraved habits and becomes an obedient servant of Christ, loving holiness and delighting in the service of God, it is impossible for him to obtain pardon, or to be justified." The only inference which must necessarily flow from these words is clearly this, namely, that the sinner must be sanctified before he can be justified. We also believe that the Doctor does not clearly distinguish between living, fruit-bearing faith, and that true confidence which a penitent should exercise in the promises of God, like the thief on the cross. Vide p. 127.

mines man's salvation and damnation, but that through a *decretum particulare*, one part of the human family has been destined for the glory of His grace, to salvation ; another part, for the glory of His justice, to damnation ; that, in conformity with this predestination, the Gospel call leads some necessarily and irresistibly to salvation ; the others, just as necessarily and irresistibly, into sin, and accordingly to damnation.

From the adoption of these dogmas, and their consequences, the founders and fathers of the Lutheran Church were preserved ; not less through that just horror with which they regarded them, than in consequence of a proper insight into the whole sum of Scripture doctrines. Whilst freely acknowledging that God's counsels far exceed our thoughts, and that it does not become us to estimate his designs and ways by human logic and laws, the Lutheran Church teaches, with the Holy Scriptures, that God will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth ; that the gracious call of the Gospel, wherever preached, is seriously intended ; that, although every man as incapable as he is of effecting, of himself, anything good, or work out his salvation, must yet, in his conscience, give his assent to the justice of the sentence which the Word of God pronounces against the awful corruption of the human heart. There is yet a desire for grace and peace in the natural heart, and God will cast no one away who will believe in Christ, the destroyer of sin. In this faith in the Son, is the life. God justifies whoever believes in Christ's sacrifice. Out of this justification, as out of man's deliverance from the curse of sin, its penalty and power, flows new love of man to God, and watching and praying, he is led forward in the way of holiness.

First of all, special prominence must be given to the fact, that the Lutheran Church has ever, most strenuously, insisted on the sacred Scriptures being received as the pure and unadulterated Word of God ; on their being obeyed without note or comment, and most implicitly relied on as his promise.

This faith in the Divine Word, this unconditional reception, is the only condition on which we can become the recipients of the blessings therein offered, and experience its happy effects, consolation and strength. Upon the obediential faith in the Word of God rests the Lutheran doctrine, and especially also that concerning the Sacraments. But let no one say that such a confidence consists merely in the exercise of a dead historical faith. That man wilfully deceives himself who thinks that the Gospel entitles him to the comforts of justification without repentance.

If it be asked, however, what particular idea forms the central point of the Lutheran creed, we feel constrained to answer, *Divine love*; Divine compassion for a world lost in sin. In this the Lutheran Creed not only rests on the leading thought which runs through the writings of St. Paul and St. John, but it is precisely in this where she has correctly explained the peculiar signification of the New Testament in opposition to the Old, which was only a shadow of good things to come. Let it only be observed how the Lutheran Church, in giving special prominence to this central point of the Christian doctrine concerning salvation, differs both from the Romish and Calvinistic Church. The *love of God*, his compassion, his voluntary coming down to us, miserable sinners, retires, in both these systems, far more into the background. According to the Romish Creed, God dwells, as it were, behind a thousand barred gates, surrounded by a brilliant retinue of saints, being shut out from the world by a priestly Church, and only accessible through this privileged caste; the poor sinner is obliged to be satisfied with directing his petition to the doorkeepers; he must torment his conscience, must bear heavy burdens, and whilst he would rejoice, in the hour of death, in the blood of the eternal Son of God, who, out of love to him, died upon the accursed tree, nothing is more certain to him than the torments of purgatory instead of the blessings

of heaven. Where in all this is there a word concerning that comforting love and mercy of God, which far exceeds all our thoughts?

The same may be said with regard to the other extreme, the Calvinistic doctrine. According to it, it is true, God has instituted a plan of salvation, but only for a chosen few. These must be saved, whether they be willing or not; the residue must be lost, because He has from all eternity so decreed it. His government is that of an absolute despot, and it behooves man to bow in silent submission to these decrees, and honor his law, both for heaven and hell. Where is there in this that love that comprehends the whole world? An eternal decree has taken the place of a father's loving, compassionate heart, to which the most abandoned sinner may address his repentant sighs, and from which he may expect forgiveness and new life. In the Romish and Calvinistic systems, terror and the law have the sway,—the eternal, irrefragable will. The Lutheran doctrine lays the main stress on love. This she regards as the chief pillar in the New Testament, and in this, namely, in recognizing this, she enjoys the undeniable superiority of having gained the clearest and fullest insight into the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

This distinguishing peculiarity of the Lutheran Church, namely, that in perfect agreement with the sacred Scriptures, she makes love the fountain of every redeeming and saving act of God, might be deduced from every dogma in her Confession. Even the revelation of his wrath, in the death of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is nothing but an exhibition of his love to man. And although other Confessions do not deny this truth, they nevertheless make it retire more into the background. In proof of this we will only cite an instructive example, as afforded in the doctrine concerning the Sacraments, and more especially in that concerning the Lord's Supper. Why does the Romish Church say, Christ does not

unite himself to bread and wine, in order to give himself to us, in this his holy ordinance, in a sacramental enjoyment? Why does she deem it necessary that bread and wine should first undergo a change, through some symbolical representation of the sufferings and death of Christ, performed by the priest? Because she separates the divine and the earthly, and will not believe, that, notwithstanding Christ, the Son of God went about amongst men, upon the earth, in the form of flesh, the divine cannot take up its abode within the earthly, and thus impart itself to us. The love of God is not recognized. Why does Zwinglé say, bread and wine only signify something already come to pass, and are commemorative signs? Because he was unable to comprehend the idea of Christ's personal surrender for us, as well as his active love to us. Why does Calvin teach us to raise our thoughts, during the enjoyment of the Holy Supper, to Christ's throne in heaven? Because that love which induced him to take up his abode in us, and eternally and inseparably unite the Godhead and humanity in one person, is, in its application to the doctrine of the Sacraments, incomprehensible to him. Now, if Luther and the Lutheran Church persist in maintaining that Christ, the God-man, gives himself to us in the Holy Supper, *in, with, and under* bread and wine, the Lutheran doctrine is not only in strict accordance with the letter of the words of institution, which is immovable, but also in perfect agreement with her interpretation of the whole divine-human manifestation and the Word of God, and has in this, as in every other respect, in accordance with her truly evangelical spirit, nothing to do with a Christ whose death is only commemorated as a mere matter of fact, nor with a Christ who is only enthroned in heaven above; but with a Christ who so loves us poor and miserable sinners, that he, in his pitying love, imparts to us, in the Holy Supper, his Divine-human nature, in order that we might truly become one with him, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. For it must not be

forgotten that St. Paul himself, where speaking of the relation Christ sustains to his people, refers to the relation the husband sustains to his wife, and even calls it a great mystery. Ephes. 5 : 29-32.

From this same point of view, which is unquestionably that of the entire Scriptures, rightly understood, the dogma concerning baptism must also be viewed,—a dogma against which ignorance and distortion have raised some exceedingly silly objections. The Lutheran dogma does not only rest on the clearest and most unequivocal declarations of God's Word, when it calls baptism the water of regeneration (Titus, 3 : 5 ; John, 3 : 5), but is perfectly justified in believing that, although, under the Old Testament dispensation, nothing but types and shadows were presented, the revealed love of God gives us, under that of the New Testament, in whatever it ordains and appoints, something real. Whatever Christ has established in his Church, and whatever is performed in the name of the triune God, is not merely a sign, but the fulfilment of what, in the Old Testament, was only typified. The love of God, which invites man to receive the ordinance of baptism, does not only offer him a shadow or type, but a substance, a reality ; it gives its own self to him. It remits his guilt, and pardons his sins, and these gifts are designed to be his as long as he lives, and they will continue to be his, till rejected by him. He consequently sustains, after baptism, a different relation to God from what he did before. He now stands under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit ; a new life, born of the Spirit, now wars within him against the life born of the flesh. Whoever, therefore, so distorts and misrepresents this doctrine as to make the Lutheran Church teach, that she regards every baptized person a complete Christian, who has already attained perfection in holiness, him we would take the liberty of asking, whether an individual who believes himself to have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost to a new life, during a peni-

tential struggle, at the anxious bench, is to be regarded a finished Christian, and one whose life is entirely free from sin? No sane man, whose mind is, at the same time, imbued with sound religious knowledge, will ever even dream of making an assertion so ridiculously absurd. The Lutheran doctrine lays the main stress *here*, as it does everywhere else, on the free and complaisant love of God, which induced him to preordain and love us, and extend to us the offer and bestowal of salvation, altogether irrespective of our condition. But this love we must gratefully and joyfully receive by faith, with our whole heart, and with childlike confidence in his gracious promises. In view of this, it has been remarked, and not without truth, that every baptism, even that of the adult, is an infant baptism; for "whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark, 10 : 15. We must exercise a childlike faith in the gracious compassion of God, and not doubt, nor presume to dictate to him, when, and where, and how to bestow his blessing.*

* We have vainly endeavored to understand the views which Dr. S. S. Schmucker entertains in regard to the doctrine of the Sacraments. Formerly, we thought we knew what the reverend Doctor means, but since the appearance of the "American Lutheranism Vindicated," we find ourselves completely in the dark. We will refer our readers to the Doctor's expressions regarding baptism. On page 125, the Doctor seems strongly to advocate the view of the Baptists. He says: "Faith presupposes regeneration. Hence, as faith is the instrumentality employed by the Holy Spirit in the production of *regeneration* and *faith*, and as baptism is to be added *after* the great moral change, conversion, has been effected in adults, it follows, that the truth or word is the grand and principal means of grace, and not secondary to baptism." On p. 128 he says: "As baptism without faith does not rescue the soul from damnation, it evidently cannot be the *immediate* or certain condition of pardon; for if the immediate condition of a blessing is performed, that blessing must be conferred." At the same time, the Doctor admits, on p. 129, that "the blessings which baptism confers on children are

Should we wish, in order to describe the spirit of primitive Lutheranism, to call particular attention to another principle, which, like an undercurrent, runs through the entire doctrinal system, and influences, perhaps more than anywhere else, the religious mind in a peculiar manner, it would be that of *Life*, a principle which is the leading idea of the New Testament. The Old Testament gave the law. But the law, the letter, does not quicken. All the works of the law cannot save. Christ, on the contrary, gives his people *life*. But this life, in the Romish Church, is wanting. She performs, to this day, nothing but legal works, thus leading her people around Golgotha, but never to the Cross, to the blood of the Lamb, the fountain of the new life. She is ignorant of what she might have in Christ, the Prince of life. The same is the case in the strictly Reformed or Calvinistic Confession, however free from Romish error it otherwise is. It attaches, most undeniably, far greater importance to the law and legal works than the Lutheran Confession does. The former regards the Gospel more as a "new law;" the latter, on the contrary, more as a "new life." The one binds more to established precepts; the other lays greater stress on Christian liberty, which is directed more by the favorable operations of the Spirit within, than by an imperative letter from without. Piety, in accordance with the general spirit of Calvinism, is fear of God, submission to his will, and obedience to his laws; according to that of Lutheran-

bestowed irrespectively of any action of their own." Again, on p. 122, the Doctor says: "We not only admit, but strenuously affirm, that the Sacraments have an important *intrinsic* value. The Platform thus describes it: 'Baptism in adults is a means of making a profession of previous faith, or of being received into the visible Church, as well as a *pledge* and *condition* of obtaining those blessings purchased by Christ, and offered to all who repent, believe in him, and profess his name by baptism. As to the question, whether this influence is intrinsic or not, it is not touched in the Platform.'"

ism, it is faith in God's love in Christ, and the divine life growing out of it, and bearing fruit to the glory of God. In all this, the Lutheran system has given special prominency to those illustrations of Christianity which are presented to us in the writings of St. Paul. According to the former, piety appears more like a task to be performed; according to the latter, more like an enjoyment of God and the quickening power of his grace:

The old German theologians did not speak at random when they declared that a *unio mystica* existed between Christ and believers. The New Testament does the same. And it certainly shows that they fully comprehended the principle of God's love to us, as well as the principle of that faith which lays hold on the love of God in Christ. The Lutheran Symbols justly denounce the doctrine of the Antinomians, who believe that the Christian needs no law; but they also insist with equal justice that the law is only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, not to supersede him, no matter how strictly it may be performed; and that all legal works are worthless, except they proceed from faith, from a change wrought by the grace of God within us. The Lutheran Confession, therefore, whilst it by no means treats with indifference the obedience to the letter of God's law, cares more about the internal, the animus, the spirit, which alone makes an act acceptable in the sight of God. And in this it is certainly well grounded on the Bible.

3. MANNER OF WORSHIP IN THE PRIMITIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

Christ, the Lord, has established his Church on earth upon two immovable pillars, namely, *the Word, and the Sacraments*. Where one of these is wanting, there, in fact, the Church is wanting also. The Augsburg Confession, therefore, very correctly teaches that the Church is "the congregation of believers in Christ, among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity, and

the holy sacraments are administered in accordance with the Gospel." (Art. VII.)

According to this, the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments form, in conjunction with prayers, the centre of the Divine worship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is not necessary here to make special mention of the fact, that the whole Reformation of the sixteenth century owes its entire success to the preaching of the Word that quickeneth. How deeply anxious Luther was to make the people acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, is abundantly evident from the great pains he took to translate them into the German language, and the zeal he manifested in imparting, both to old and young, religious instruction, and the active interest he displayed in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the education and preparation of evangelical ministers. What here more especially claims our attention is, not that which the Lutheran Church possesses in her worship, in common with other evangelical denominations, but that in which she differs from them. And even in this we confine ourselves to the more important.

And first, we must again remind the reader that the Lutheran Church has, from the beginning, clearly laid down the principle, and stoutly maintained it, that the greatest possible importance is to be attached to *purity of doctrine according to the Word of God*, but that in matters pertaining merely to the outward mode and manner of worship, Christian liberty should be granted, as long as nothing be done contrary to the Divine Word. The Christian worship is not, like that of the Jews under Moses, regulated by "special law." And where there is no law given, liberty becomes a law. This liberty the Lutheran Church freely accords to all. Yet its exercise must necessarily depend on, and be regulated by, local, temporary, ethnological, and national relations and circumstances. And whatever usages and customs may grow out of the co-operation of

these different relations, in any Christian community, those will become the established customs and usages of that community, and as such should enjoy the respect of its members. They even receive, in the course of time, the sanction, and often exercise the authority, of law. This is, for instance, the case in the Presbyterian Church, in which the exclusive use of extemporaneous prayer has become a law; notwithstanding nothing of the kind is to be found in the sacred Scriptures. Among the Episcopalians precisely the reverse is to be seen. In view of that liberal spirit which, in reference to this point, has prevailed in the Lutheran Church from the beginning, we are not surprised that no inconsiderable differences in the mode and manner of her worship have always existed among her members, both in the different parts of Germany itself, as well as in other countries. We will, as much as possible, confine ourselves to an enumeration of what she has, in the main, in common.

There are two elements in particular, which, in the arrangement of the worship of the Lutheran Church in Germany, were of importance, and which we have already described in connection with Luther's personal character, namely, a conservative, and esthetic or artistic element. Luther was anxious to retain of the old, what the Word of God did not prohibit. He respected prevailing customs, as long as they were not in opposition to the Divine law. Himself an ardent admirer of the fine arts, and numbering among his personal friends painters, such as Lucas Kranach, musicians, such as Walther, he also knew that the Germans possessed a very lively sense and appreciation of the beautiful. He availed himself of art, the beautiful, to add to the solemnity of public worship. For this purpose he employed the clerical vestments of the officiating minister; availed himself of sacred music, by causing alternate singing between the minister and the choir; was not offended by artistically embellished altars and churches, and

even would permit lighted candles upon the altar, as the symbol of the light of the Gospel in this darksome world. He also retained in the Church the dearest and most sacred memorial, the cross, and other similar things. And this was the man who had given the deathblow to Popery; this was the Church which first of all replaced the candlestick of the Gospel. Was Luther, was the Lutheran Church on that account Popish? Let us not judge that which is to be received by us as Christian, by the accidental standard we may have adopted under the influence of surrounding circumstances, the contractedness of our own habits, the everchanging opinions of any particular age, no matter whether the influences to which we are exposed be Quaker, Puritanic, or Episcopalian. It is deeply to be regretted that the great mass of our ministers and laity possess so little acquaintance with the history of Christian customs and Church usages. Were they better informed on these subjects, they would, in many instances, form quite a different opinion. In illustration of this fact, we will merely relate the following circumstance. Luther usually made the sign of the cross with his hand, &c.; he gives directions in his *Smaller Catechism* to all Christians to do the same. Is this anything Popish? Some will be inclined to say, Yes. Yet Tertullian, who lived during the second century, when the Papacy was not yet dreamed of, and what we now call Romish customs did not obtain, says of his time, that Christians were in the habit daily of making the sign of the cross on their foreheads when performing all manner of business, at their outgoings and incomings, mornings and evenings, &c. (*Tertull. de Cor. Mil. c. 3.* See also *Ad Nation. c. 1, 12; Apologet. c. 16.*)

Of the mode and manner of public worship in the Apostolic age we, unfortunately, know very little. Certain it is, however, that Christians were obliged, during the first few centuries of the Church's existence, to keep many things hid from the Gentiles, so as to prevent pernicious misunderstandings,

which nevertheless happened. According to St. Augustine, it was the custom not even to commit the Apostle's Creed to writing, but transmit it orally. The statement that the Christians of the first three centuries conducted their public worship with Puritanic simplicity, is purely imaginary; and those who make it, fabricate a history in opposition to the testimony of history to suit their own predilections. Whoever resorts to the opinion that the Church rapidly degenerated immediately after the Apostolic age, should remember that the Christians of that time poured out, with the zeal of true and faithful witnesses, their very life-blood in honor of their faith and hope. We do, however, not wish to be so understood as if attaching any importance to mere outward signs of devotion and faith, or as advocating the reintroduction of things obsolete, and from which no possible benefit could be derived.

In regard to the Lutheran worship it must be remarked, that in its arrangement Luther aimed especially at securing the claims of three things, namely, *adoration*, or prayer, the preaching of the Word, and the celebration of the Holy Sacraments. And in this too he exhibited that soundness of judgment which was peculiar to himself, and under the guidance of which he always avoided extremes. In the Romish Church the preaching of the Word had been almost entirely abandoned, and her worship consisted almost exclusively of ceremonial acts of devotion. In this state of things ignorance in religion could not but continue to increase. On the other hand, in extreme Protestantism, and more especially in Puritanism, the preaching of the Word has formed the principal part of divine worship, whilst the adoration of God, worship in a more specific sense, has almost entirely disappeared. People resort to the house of God to hear the sermon, the eloquent speaker, the great orator. They come as censorious and critical hearers. A true spirit of devotion is evidently too much wanting in most of our Protestant religious assem-

blies, a want which is beginning to be more and more felt and acknowledged.*

Luther was desirous of according to the preaching of the Word all that prominence which it deserves. And he did it. But he was equally desirous, on the other hand, of securing to the other part its right. He well knew how vastly the congregation at large, as well as each individual member, would be benefited by cultivating a deep and sincere feeling of adoration and devotion. This is something more than simply being an attentive *listener* to a preached sermon, or an eloquent prayer. The regular singing of chorals by choirs was a means of uniting the congregation in common prayer. This was still more the case by making the service *liturgical*; these were set prayers, which the officiating minister read, and in which the congregation took an active part, by giving the responses, as is customary in the Episcopal Church now, and as, according to the united testimony of the ancient Church-fathers, it was customary in the Christian Church from the beginning. We refrain here from any remarks in reference to our mostly stereotyped so-called extemporaneous prayers.†

* It is truly deplorable to see what stress is laid, in the election of ministers and pastors, on their eloquence, their oratorial powers, the sparkling effusions of their imagination, the grace, fulness of their elocution, and the display of learning, which is often of a very doubtful character. To listen to such sermons becomes with many merely a sort of entertainment. True devotion does not consist in an excitement of feelings, produced by the outpourings of natural gifts, but is the result of child-like faith in the plain, and, at the same time, sublime manifestations of God's love in his Word. We would here also take occasion to express our feelings of horror at the desecration of many places dedicated to the worship of God, by converting them into lecture-rooms, banqueting-halls, halls of exhibition, &c. "My house is a house of prayer," saith the Lord.

† To those who manifest such decided and not unfrequently even fanatical opposition to the use of liturgical prayers, we would simply propose the question, where more fruit of piety, more morality, honesty, justice,

It is sufficient for our purpose simply to direct attention to the fact, that in the Lutheran Church, both, set (liturgical), and spontaneous extemporaneous prayers are admitted. The former is salutary, for it is designed to pronounce the faith of the Church, her acknowledged Confession, prevents arbitrary alterations and changes, and by being often repeated by the people becomes familiar to them. A good prayer is always edifying, no matter how often repeated. Every pious soul experiences this in the use of the Lord's Prayer. The latter, namely, extemporaneous prayer, is salutary, because it is to show that the one faith of the Church and of the Fathers has not only been handed down to us as a tradition, but is a living reality, that in its spirit we too might be able to pray. Luther has bequeathed to the Church a treasure of the most precious prayers, partly such as gushed forth from his own heart, and partly such as had been in use in the Church for centuries, and from which he expurgated all Romish additions. O, would that our ministers were more generally acquainted with the rich treasure of the ancient prayers of our Church and the Christian Church as a whole, which breathe, in the language of the Holy Scriptures, a power of faith hardly known to our times.

In the primitive Lutheran Church, therefore, the preaching of the Word constituted one part; another consisted in the exercise of adoration, conducted as a special act, although prayer was also joined to preaching. The whole service was so arranged that adoration or prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, benevolence is to be met with, among the Puritans, who do not use a liturgy, or among Episcopalians, who do? We would not like to decide. The tree is known by its fruit. We would also point to the fact that many of the hymns sung in our churches are *set churchly prayers*. And, surely, they greatly promote edification, and would do so in a still more eminent degree, if people, some of whom exhibit a laudable skill in singing in private parlors and other places, were not too indifferent to sing in church.

tures, preaching, and the Lord's Supper, formed integral parts of the whole, so that the order of the principal service on every Lord's-day was as follows :

A. The *Introit*; a short prayer, commencing with a passage taken from the Psalms, with reference to the course of the ecclesiastical year.

B. The *Kyrie Eleison*: Lord have mercy on us, miserable sinners.

C. The Gloria in Excelsis.

D. The *Collect*, with introductory passages from the Bible, a short and comprehensive prayer for the preparation of the spirit to listen to the reading of the lessons of the day—the Epistle and Gospel.

E. The Epistle for the day. The Epistles were read in the apostolic congregations before the Gospels had been committed to writing, and before they were read. On this account the custom of reading the Epistle first was continued.

F. The Graduale; passages from the Psalms, sung by the choir.

G. The Gospel of the day.

H. The united singing of the Creed.

I. The Sermon.

K. *Praefatio*; a prayer of praise, which always referred to the times and festivals of the ecclesiastical year, and concluded with the Holy, Holy, Holy, &c.

L. The Consecration of the bread and wine, by pronouncing the words of Institution and the Lord's Prayer.

M. The Distribution of the Lord's Supper, whilst the congregation sang, "O, Lamb of God," etc., and which was received by the communicants kneeling around the altar.

N. Finally, the Prayer of Thanks for the enjoyment of the Holy Supper, and the dismissal of the congregation with the blessing.

This is the order in which Luther arranged the principal

service of the day, in 1523. It was his wish to celebrate the solemn service of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, for the primitive Christians celebrated it during the apostolic age, as is well known, at the close of every regular service. Luther even declared at that time, that if any one felt disposed to light candles or burn incense, as in the Old Testament, they might do so, for such things were neither prohibited nor commanded. At first, he permitted even the use of some Latin in German churches, in consideration of its having been an ancient custom, and because most men were, at that time, familiar with the language. But he afterwards dropt this also, simplified considerably the order of exercises, and exerted himself generally to preserve Christian liberty in the external arrangement of public worship.

It seems almost incredible, that there are to be found individuals, even in the bosom of the Lutheran Church, who persist in maintaining, that Luther had approved of the ceremonies of the *Romish* mass. We will here only remind the reader, in passing, that the principle of liberty in matters pertaining to public worship is altogether foreign to the *Romish* Church, both as regards the letter and spirit. Nor can any one make such an assertion, who is at all acquainted with the order of the *Romish* Canon concerning the mass. They should first inform themselves better about this, before they prefer such an accusation against Luther. The ceremonies of the *Romish* mass may be regarded as a symbolical representation of the progress of Christ's sufferings and death, as Christ is even sacrificed again in its ceremonies, according to the Roman doctrine.*

To show the injustice and groundlessness of the assertion alluded to above, it only need be mentioned, that Luther, in

* In the solemnities of the mass in the Greek Church, this stands out yet more prominently. In this sense are to be understood the formulas and hymns of their liturgy, and all the symbolical rites and ceremonies of the priest and officiating ministrants.

connection with others, expunged also that part in the Romish mass which is there regarded as so very important, namely, the *offertorium*, or that act of the priest by which he offers, on the part of the people, bread and wine to God. In like manner did he prohibit priests from celebrating mass for themselves. Of his opposition to the principal point in the Romish mass, the repeated offering of Christ, and the changing of bread and wine, it is unnecessary here to speak. If Luther retained, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, some few customs, such as the sign of the cross, exorcism, and others, it was not done because these customs were *Romish*, but rather because they were ancient Christian. He however granted, we repeat it once more, full liberty in this respect, because the Holy Scriptures contained neither a prohibition nor a commandment in reference thereto. It has recently been confidently asserted by Dr. S. S. Schmucker, what, to our knowledge, no Lutheran has ever yet even remotely hinted at, namely, that the word *mass*, as used in the Augsburg Confession, does not mean the celebration of the Holy Supper. We will hear what Luther himself has to say in reference to this assertion. About three years after the drawing up of the Augsburg Confession, he discourses in his tract on the "*Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe*" as follows: "God be praised, we are able to show, in our Church, a genuine Christian mass, according to the appointment and institution of Christ and the Church. Here our curate, bishop, or minister, right honorably and properly called, stands before the altar—he chants, publicly and plainly, the form instituted by Christ, takes the bread and wine; gives thanks, distributes and gives it, by virtue of the words of Christ, 'this is my body, this is my blood, this do in remembrance of me,' to us, as we are there assembled; and we, particularly those who wish to partake of the sacrament, kneel beside him, behind and around him, husband, wife, young, old, master, servant, &c., just as God has brought us

together, all of us right holy fellow-priests, sanctified through the blood of Christ, and through the Holy Spirit anointed and consecrated in holy baptism. And in this our inborn and hereditary priestly honor and attire we are there like those who are described in Rev. 4 : 4, as having crowns of gold upon their heads, harps in their hands, and golden censers. And we do not permit our ministers to repeat the words of institution used by Christ, as if designed for himself alone, but he is our spokesman, and all of us repeat them with him, from the heart, and with our faith directed to the Lamb of God, who is for and with us, and who, in accordance with his institution, nourishes us with his body and blood. *This is our mass, and it is the right mass*, and which we should not like to be without." (Luther's Works, Walch, XIX, p. 1561.)* This will suffice. Let the reader first look at this glorious and truly edifying picture, and then at a Romish mass. We have no disposition to forestall his decision.

It is unnecessary to add anything more in reference to the order of worship in the primitive Lutheran Church. That adoration, the reading and preaching of the Word, and the celebration of the Holy Sacraments, constituted the principal parts, has been satisfactorily proven. Luther also established Bible-classes, with a view to a systematic explanation of the Scriptures, social prayer-meetings in the church, and catechization in churches and schools. He insisted particularly on family worship, and the religious instruction and education of children by parents, and all such as have the charge over them. As for the rest, the Lutheran principle is that of

* We would here call the reader's attention to a series of highly instructive extracts, translated from the writings of former Lutheran theologians, which have recently appeared in the columns of the Missionary, under the well-known signature of C. P. K., and which are well calculated to throw light upon the evangelical and biblical character of our Confession, as well as to refute the errors of the Platformists.

liberty in all matters not expressly prohibited or enjoined in the Word of God. The Puritanic mode of worship is also proper in its place. We do not call it unchristian. But to reject that of the primitive Lutheran Church, which is certainly more solemn and devotional than the Puritan, as Romish, and thus draw upon it the hatred and contempt of the ignorant, with whom Romish, unchristian, and heathenish are synonymous terms; nay, to go even so far as to attempt to make it odious in the eyes, and lower it in the estimation of her own members, instead of properly enlightening their minds in regard thereto, is not right; it is beneath the dignity of any man whose calling requires him not to cater to public prejudices, but to remove them by imparting correct instruction from the history of the Christian Church.

Something might yet be added about the constitution of the primitive Lutheran Church. It is well known, that, torn loose from the Papacy, she was induced, by the force of circumstances, and, especially, on account of the persecutions of the Romish Church and princes to which she was exposed, to cast herself on the protection of those princes who had espoused the cause of the Gospel. This was in many respects an unfortunate circumstance for the Lutheran Church, as her union, in the Old World, with the State, is to this day. This is altogether different in the New World. It is our intention, in another place, to return to this significant fact.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRICT LUTHERANS OF THE PRESENT DAY.

1. HISTORY OF THE STRICT LUTHERANS.

THE preceding explanations were necessary in order to show the reader clearly on what historical foundation that party, in the Lutheran Church, stands, which we properly denominate

the strict Old Lutheran party. We will first give a short sketch of its history, in order to be able to be more brief in our statements of its leading principles, and its whole spirit and tendency.

First, then, the *history of Old Lutheranism* in America. We speak now of those Lutherans who occupy a position more in direct opposition to American Lutheranism, namely, the Brethren belonging respectively to the Synods of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, and that composed of Rev. Grabau and his associates, and often called, but not properly, the Synod of Buffalo.

It is well known, that the Lutheran Church in Germany has, from the middle of the last century, till lately, suffered greatly from rationalistic tendencies, which had crept into her theology. A reaction against these encroachments of an infidel philosophy upon the sanctuary of the Church, which, it is true, had still retained a hold on some of her members, commenced soon after the conclusion of that terrible war, that had, at the beginning of the present century, shaken both Church and State to their very foundations.

This happened about the year 1817, at the time of the third grand Jubilee of the Reformation. When Christian faith and life began again to revive, thousands evinced a desire that all Christians who believed in the sacred Scriptures as the Word of God, and in Christ as the Son of God, should henceforth be united into one Church Union; and that all differences existing between the Lutheran and the German Reformed Confession should consequently be set aside, and a United Evangelical Church be established. This project did not only meet with favor from a considerable number of theologians, who interested themselves in its accomplishment, but it became a favorite measure with Frederic William III, who was at that time the reigning king of Prussia, and who died in 1840. He accordingly caused arrangements to be made in the Evangelical Church of Prussia, and proposed a new Church

Prayer Book, the so-called *Prussian Agenda* of the year 1822. The king, of course, did not intend this to be regarded in the light of dictation, but rather as a personal desire. A royal wish, however, whilst passing through the hands of subalterns, becomes often changed into a command. This Agenda gave considerable offence. To those whose minds had been tainted with rationalism, and who had not regained a taste for the language and steadfast faith of the primitive Church, it appeared too Romanizing or too Old Churchly. Others discovered that it was not Lutheran enough, that it intentionally evaded the doctrinal differences of the Reformed, especially touching those concerning the Sacraments. To express satisfaction with such an Agenda, which was essentially neutral, seemed to them an act of perfidy in regard to the Lutheran Confession. And, indeed, since Gospel-faith has been reanimated in Germany, the conviction has been strengthened, both among Lutherans and German Reformed, that the points of difference between the two Confessions are, by no means, easy of reconciliation. There are, moreover, many signs which indicate that it would be far easier to effect a dissolution of the union of the two Evangelical Churches, than it had been to bring it about in the manner in which it had been done.

In Prussia, the reaction against the Union continued, on the part of the Lutherans, to increase in strength, the more it became apparent that the royal government strove to support it and the alterations it had induced by the exercise of its secular authority. At last matters came to such a pass, that a number of ministers and congregations handed in a formal protest against the Union, and dissolved their connection with the Prussian State-Church. For since that doubtful Liturgy was to be regarded by them as a law, it was useless to maintain that the Lutheran Church, as such, with its peculiar Confession, had not been abolished by that Union. The strict Lutherans wanted their old Church Prayer Books, and the old

Lutheran rites and ceremonies at the celebration of the Holy Sacraments. The ministers in favor of this, part of whom had been suspended from the exercise of their functions by the government, resolved, at a Synod convened in Breslau, in 1835, to preserve the Lutheran Church by the employment of all lawful means. Strict Lutheran Churches were consequently preserved, especially in Silesia, and also in other parts of the Kingdom of Prussia. They introduced amongst themselves the Apostolic form of Church government, and maintained a very rigid Church discipline. The Prussian government committed the folly and injustice of persecuting both ministers and congregations; attempting even to force them into compliance by the aid of the military. Thus it happened that many of the adherents of the Lutheran tendency, after having passed through many sore and severe trials of their faith, chose, rather than to deny the faith of their fathers, to leave their fatherland. However, these persecutions of the Lutherans in Prussia having ceased since the accession of Frederic William IV, the Union has not gained in strength, whilst the strict Lutheran party, though its adherents did not all secede from the State Church, has, for a number of years, steadily advanced. In some of the other German States too, as in Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover, Mecklenburg, love for the Lutheran Confession is fast returning, and this orthodox tendency is defended by the most distinguished theologians, such as Rudelbach, Harless, Sartorius, Thomasius, Delilzsch, Hoffmann, Kliefoth, Kanis, and others, with the most decided success.

f Those Lutherans driven out of Prussia by persecution found in the United States, where many of them had emigrated, other strict Old Lutherans, who, in 1838, misled by the fanaticism of the Saxon preacher, Stephan, had seceded from the Lutheran Church in Saxony, and emigrated to America. But, becoming convinced of Stephan's perverseness, they expelled him from their communion, and returned again to sounder

Church views. In addition to these Prussians and Saxons, others have since arrived, partly sent out by that well-known Bavarian minister and Christian writer, W. Loehe, and partly by the Missionary Society of Saxony. Some came in consequence of the oppressed condition of things at home, whilst, in 1840, others from Bavaria, Saxony, and Hanover, came from free choice, and for the express purpose of breaking the bread of life to their brethren in a distant land, all of whom found, amidst the great mass of German emigrants, abundant opportunities either to take charge of congregations, or to organize them. The general condition of the Lutheran Church and of the German part of its members in America, had become fully known in Germany, through Rev. Wynecken's pamphlet, entitled, "The Wants of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

It might have been expected and desired, that these Brethren would at once unite with the Lutheran Church in this country, or with existing Synods, or with the General Synod, and in connection with it organize new Synods. That they, however, did not do this, seems very natural. The cause of their standing aloof from the General Synod is not so much to be sought for in the difference of languages, as in other circumstances. Most of them settled in the far West. They had left Germany because the Evangelical Union Church was not Lutheran enough for them. And when they arrived here, what did they find? A General Synod, the most important representative of the Lutheran Church in this country, which did not stand on the basis of the Lutheran Church, nay, which did not even unequivocally acknowledge the Augsburg Confession as the principal confessional document of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and whose members were, in their theological views, decidedly Zwinglean, in their practice generally Puritanic, and withal unable to offer a vigorous opposition by means of sound religious principles to the delusions of Methodism.

Thus it happened that these Brethren felt the necessity of forming themselves into a separate Synod. The way to this was prepared by the Conferences held, respectively, in 1845, in Cleveland, Ohio, and in 1846, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Synod was organized under the name and title of "The Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States," in Chicago, Illinois, April 26, 1847. It numbered at that time 22 standing members in its Ministerium, namely, 12 ministers entitled to vote, i.e. such whose congregations stood connected with the Synod; and 10 advisory members, i.e. such as only stood connected with it as individuals. In addition to these, there were also present 2 candidates of the Ministerium who sided with the Synod.

F/ The acknowledged organ of this tendency, "*The Lutheran*," has been in existence since 1843. It is edited by the Rev. Prof. C. T. W. Walther, a man of a most thorough theological education. He is a decided Lutheran, and there are few in our day more intimately acquainted with the Old Lutheran doctrines and divines than he. He has lately rendered very important service to the department of science by his work on the Lutheran doctrine concerning the church and the ministerial office. He has also edited, for several years, a religious periodical, under the title of "*Lehre und Wehre*" (Doctrine and Defence), which is designed to meet the wants of the scientific, as the *Lutheraner* endeavors to meet those of the popular part of that community.

These periodicals afford already in themselves an evidence of the energetic spirit of these Lutheran brethren, who have, in a measure, made a new beginning with the Lutheran Church in America. They are also unwearied in their exertions to organize new congregations, build new churches, and especially to promote religious instruction, and erect parochial schools. They justly regard these as the most effectual means to ground the young in the doctrines of the mother Church, and thus preserve the Church itself from final dissolution. They have, besides, already a number of higher educational institutions

in connection with this new Lutheran Church, built on the old foundation. There is, for instance, Concordia College, in St. Louis, which contains, at present, already more than fifty students. In the Seminary at Fort Wayne there are now about thirty candidates in course of preparation for the profession of school-teachers and ministers of the Gospel. This seminary alone has, during the nine years of its existence, sent out seventy-two school-teachers and ministers; and it is worthy of special notice, that this institution pays particular attention to the training of competent school-masters.

The dispersion of these Lutheran brethren over the eastern and western part of this country, made a division of the original Synod into four district Synods necessary, which was brought about in 1854. The total number of ministers in connection with these Synods amounts at this present writing (Sept. 1856) to about 140. A joint or general meeting takes place once in every three years. The district Synods and their respective congregations are from time to time visited by the President of the General Synod, a custom in which one of the distinguishing features of the Episcopal organization is practically applied by Lutherans, a circumstance eminently deserving the attention of the entire Church.

In connection with this must also be mentioned a party, composed of a comparatively small number of ministers and congregations, who, though in every essential in perfect harmony with the Synods of Missouri and Ohio, and other States, do yet stand aloof from a more intimate connection with them. This is the Synod of Buffalo, whose principles find their chief advocate and defender in Rev. J. A. A. Grabau, who also edits a separate paper, the "Kirchliche Informatorium" (Church Intelligencer).

Rev. Mr. Grabau, a Prussian by birth, was formerly a member of the Synod of Missouri, &c. In a pastoral letter, published as far back as 1840, he complained of certain irre-

gularities in Church matters, of which some congregations had been guilty. He justly denounced the practice of individual congregations electing and installing pastors under any pretence whatsoever, without even the advice of an existing Ministerium, maintaining that men thus arbitrarily appointed by a congregation, should not be permitted to preach and administer the holy Sacraments. From this follows, by necessary inference, the principle, that ordination performed by the Ministerium is not simply an ecclesiastical custom, but a divine necessity. These views met with opposition, especially from the Saxon portion of the clerical members of the Synod of Missouri, &c., because they were apprehensive lest the ministry of the New Testament might gradually assume the character of the hierarchical priesthood of the Old, and become a caste, or separate and fixed order of men, who claim the exclusive right to minister in holy things. Grabau and his friends, on the other hand, feared the introduction of a too liberal and lax form of Church government, a democracy in the bad sense of the term. At first, the discussion was more of a scientific character; soon, however, conflicting interests of individual congregations were identified with it; each party judged of these cases according to its own theory, and the differences have not been adjusted to this day. German theologians were appealed to, but their advice was equally ineffectual to heal the breach. To us it seems that Rev. Mr. Grabau lays so much stress upon the priestly character of the evangelical ministry, that the general priesthood of evangelical Christians, upon which Luther, in opposition to the Romish clergy, so strenuously insisted, is thrown too much into the background. But after all, it must be confessed, that none can serve their congregations more faithfully and conscientiously, or be more attentive to the instruction of the young than he is; a fact to which the brethren of the Synod of Missouri, &c., have repeatedly testified.

In connection with this it must also be mentioned, that a

small Synod, numbering but few ministers, has recently been organized in Iowa. These brethren agree essentially with the principles maintained by that portion of the Lutheran Church of which we have just been treating, with the exception that they occupy a middle course between Grabau and his Synod, on the one side, and the Synod of Missouri, &c., on the other, on the doctrine concerning the office of the evangelical ministry. They seem to have adopted the views lately advanced by the Rev. W. Loche, of Bavaria, to whom we have already alluded. We, however, are free to confess, that we have not as yet been able to make ourselves fully acquainted with their principles.

If it be asked, what is the actual character of this stricter Lutheran tendency? it may be answered, that it is the endeavor of its adherents to remain true to primitive Lutheranism, to restore the Lutheran Church to its original formation, and continue to build on its ancient foundation. After what has already been said in regard to the condition of the primitive Lutheran Church, we may be permitted to be more brief in what follows.

2. THEIR DOCTRINAL POSITION, FORMS OF WORSHIP, AND RELIGIOUS LIFE.

In *doctrinal* views, these brethren stand on the Confession of that faith which is contained in the *Symbolical Books* of the Lutheran Church, as far as they are comprehended as a whole, the several parts of which are explanatory and supplementary to each other. They regard the dogmatical system of Christianity, as contained in these books, as being the *true interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures*. They do not esteem these writings, because they emanated from Luther, or from some of the other fathers of the Lutheran Church, or because they had once obtained authority in the Lutheran Church, or are of importance in connection with its history, but because

they cherish the conviction that a better and more correct comprehension of the principal doctrines of the sacred Scriptures has never been produced, nor can be. They regard a Confession of Faith of absolute necessity to the Church, for the Bible is equally in the hands of the Catholic, the Baptist, the Unitarian, and the Quaker. But they read it, each one with his own eyes. Each finds his own peculiar tenets in it. A Church destitute of a fixed interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, which she regards as the true one, and adopts as her own, would be nothing but a confused mass of dogmatical and religious views of mere individuals.

This Confession, adopted by the Church, forms the Confession of the Church. Only by means of it the Church acquires a fixed character, or, so to speak, an individual look, peculiar features, by which it is distinguished from other religious societies. It is just in this way that a Church retains her individual life in history. She thus remains true to herself, and possesses a guarantee against her own dissolution. It is a well-known fact, that during the last century, in Germany, the decline of the authority of the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, and the rise of rationalistic theology, were simultaneous. At present, we find that in the same country respect for the Symbolical Books is returning, and with it faith and piety. Symbols are nothing else than what the original meaning of this word of Greek derivation signifies, namely, a compilation of the principal doctrines of the Creed; they either pronounce the true orthodox Faith, like, as for instance, the Apostle's Creed, or they give a clear explanation of it, in accordance with the sacred Scriptures, refuting and rejecting the views of heretics, wherever they teach doctrines at variance with the Word of God. This is done with peculiar skill especially by the larger among the writings of the Symbolical Books.

It is easy to perceive what an anomaly it would be to call

any modern religious society the *Lutheran Church*, except it, at the same time, regards that as the Confession of its Faith, which was regarded as such by the Lutheran Church from the beginning. The Lutheran Church certainly holds many doctrines in common with other denominations. But this by no means constitutes her the *Lutheran Church*; just as little as, on the other hand, a Unitarian can be called a Lutheran, because his ancestors may, at one time, have been Lutherans. The Lutheran Church is Lutheran, by virtue of its peculiar Lutheran Creed, and not without it. As soon as it relinquishes this or any part of it, it forfeits its claim to the name. The members of the Lutheran Church possess, at all times, the right to subject the faith of their Church to the most rigorous examination by the Word of God; and in case they should not find it in perfect agreement with it, they have the privilege to leave a Church whose Confession seems to them at variance with the Word of God. But to change this ancient Confession, and in this altered condition pass it off as the Lutheran Confession, is as far from being just and honest as it would be to take one of Raphael's original paintings, and, after having altered its nose, eyes, mouth, and ears, persist in calling Raphael the father of such a mutilated production. No one has ever contended that the Symbolical Books are of equal importance with the Scriptures, or that they make the Scriptures needless. No! They only claim to be a compilation of the principal doctrines of salvation, and a plain Scriptural exposition of the points especially in dispute among the different religious parties existing at the time of the Reformation. It is true that our salvation does not exactly depend equally on all of those points, as, for instance, on that of the Holy Sacraments, yet it cannot be denied that not one of them in the entire doctrinal system was accidentally this or that way determined, but they constitute a whole, in which the several parts are to agree with, and necessarily affect, each other. Thus,

for instance, the dogma concerning the Holy Sacraments will not be made a condition of salvation; but my comprehension of this doctrine stands connected with the meaning which I attach to the declaration of the sacred Scriptures, and also with my entire view concerning the relation sustained by Christ to his redeemed. Therefore it is possible for me to be in error in regard to one point, without thereby overthrowing the entire foundation of the Creed, i. e. I may remain ignorant of the consequences which may result to the whole Christian system of doctrines from my error. But the more clearly I understand the intimate connection of all the different parts, the less shall I feel inclined to regard it as a matter of indifference whether I believe so or so in reference to any single doctrinal point.

If, therefore, these Lutheran brethren of a stricter symbolical tendency require the members, and among these especially the ministers of the Lutheran Church, to maintain its ancient Creed, they are not only justified by the former universal custom of the Lutheran Church, but they do it to make the Word of God, and not, as some will have it, the word of man, binding on their consciences, the true interpretation of which they confidently believe to be contained in the confessional documents of the Lutheran Church. They challenge to a most open examination of the sacred Scriptures, and to the severest trial of the Symbolical Books by them. Should any one find that these books teach anything contrary to these Scriptures, he should at once give up all desire of remaining any longer a member or minister of the Lutheran Church. No one should receive the Lutheran Confession on the authority of another, but find it again and again, as the result of his own investigations, in the sacred Scriptures. He will then not be in danger of lifeless orthodoxy, but heartily rejoice at the enlightened understanding with which his Church has been favored, and gladly proclaim her doctrines. But to make the Symbolical

Books of our Church, so closely interwoven as they are with her entire history, not even a subject of study, or even condemn and reject them, before having carefully compared them with the Word of God, is unworthy of every honest and noble-minded Christian, to say nothing of his being a Lutheran. These are, in the main, the principles hitherto maintained by all the adherents of the Old Lutheran faith.

This may suffice to show why the brethren of a stricter symbolical tendency maintain the principle, that the Lutheran Creed, as contained in the Symbolical Books, must have authority in the Lutheran Church. They cannot convince themselves that these documents, as a whole, contain anything contradictory to the Scriptures, and therefore retain them, nay, they would lay themselves open to the charge of acting most unconscionably if, with these convictions, they would not retain them. To them they must adhere under all circumstances which everywhere exert their influence on men, even in cases where by a change of the principles of the Lutheran Church the greatest external advantages should offer. For truth possesses a value above all prize; this we must hold fast, teach, and believe, order our lives in strict conformity to it, and leave the rest to the all-controlling Providence of God.

As regards the *forms* employed in the Divine worship of strict Lutherans, we have but little to say. They, of course, maintain with the Symbolical Books, the principle to which repeated reference has already been made, namely, that in regard to this subject liberty is to be granted, and nothing is to be rejected, except what is contrary to the Word of God, and does not tend to the edification of evangelical Christians. But that uniformity in these things, though not absolutely necessary, is nevertheless desirable throughout the Church in general, is a point concerning which they are also agreed. They have, however, hitherto been unsuccessful in their endeavors to bring about such a uniformity, and are far from making any

law in reference thereto, lest what would be acceptable to some might prove obnoxious to others. In the meantime, however, they are endeavoring to preserve in the main the regulations as they obtained in the Lutheran Church during the sixteenth century. They consequently observe in their public worship the same order which we introduced above, as that followed by Luther himself. They read every Sunday the Old Epistles and Gospels, sing antiphonies and chorals, and celebrate the Lord's Supper, if not every week, yet much more frequently than other Lutheran Churches in this country are accustomed to celebrate it. They published, about fifteen years ago, a Hymn-book for the use of their congregations. In this are contained the old church-hymns; we say the *old*, because what the German Lutheran Church has since the middle of the last century added to her hymnological treasury is of no account, not even the productions of such men as Hiller, Bengel, Spitta, Knapp, &c. In an appendix to the Hymn-book are found prayers for private use, formulas for private baptisms (*Nothtaufen*), a collection of Antiphonies (Intonations and Responses), the prefations on Sundays and festivals, Luther's Smaller Catechism, the Ecumenical Symbols, the Augsburg Confession, the Epistles and Gospels of the ecclesiastical year, and the history of Christ's sufferings, according to the four Evangelists. This Hymn-book has accordingly been prepared with a view to liturgical worship, and may in many respects be regarded similar to the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church. Preaching is always joined with extemporaneous prayer. Their choral-singing is quicker and livelier than in most places in Germany and this country. A common Church prayer book has not yet been published by these brethren. We have, however, been informed, that they are about having reprinted for their use, with probably a few unavoidable alterations, the order of services formerly in use in Wittenberg, Saxony. The Liturgy, published, about two years since, by

the Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States, they do not deem satisfactory. They also adhere very strictly to the Old Lutheran custom of catechizing the children on every Sunday. As regards external forms of worship, no fixed rules have been established. The *sign of the Cross* is, as far as we know, by many a general custom, whether the minister makes it with his hand, or whether a crucifix stands on the altar in commemoration of the sacrifice rendered by Christ on Golgotha. Of any superstitions being connected therewith, there are no traces whatever. In some congregations, lights are also, on special occasions, kept burning upon the altar. Of the existence of any other strange or unusual customs among them we have no knowledge. Moreover, neither of these things is looked upon as being essential. They are merely regarded as ancient customs, retained out of consideration for many of their members, who have emigrated from the northern part of Germany, where they are in use throughout the entire Lutheran Church. We refer the reader, in regard to this subject, to the Minutes of the Eastern District of the Synod of Missouri, &c., of 1855, p. 14. The Minutes of the Western District Synod of 1855, p. 33, ff., are equally explicit. They urge the *doctrine of Christian liberty* in the introduction or exclusion of ceremonies, but press, at the same time, the view that ceremonies which have once become identified with a Confession, such as the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper, as a confessional mark of the Reformed, are to be regarded in a different light as other general religious ceremonies. This they regard as manifestly unsuitable to be introduced into the Lutheran Church, because this has always been a distinguishing feature of the Reformed Church. As to using bread or wafers, it is immaterial, only caution in all such matters should be observed. As an appropriate ceremony was named the use of the Old Testament blessing as most proper for dismissal, &c. The sign of the Cross used in Baptism,

in the Lord's Supper, confirmation, absolution, and blessing, is called "the most lovely Christian ceremony," because it "continually reminds us of Him who, for our redemption, died upon the Cross, and through whom all heavenly blessings are received."

But what is the *character of the religious life* of these Lutheran brethren of a stricter tendency? If active zeal in the promotion of the kingdom of God, in the spirit of the Lutheran Church, may be regarded as an evidence of living piety, they are not surpassed by any part of that Church. They manifest the most lively interest in the cause of missions, having erected stations even among some of the Indian tribes of the northwestern part of this country. They are indefatigable in the building up of colleges, seminaries, churches, parochial schools, and congregations. These congregations are often very small in numbers, but always ready to do their utmost in sustaining their churches, schools, and public worship. Many of our German congregations especially would do well to imitate these brethren in their voluntary, self-denying labors for the kingdom of God. Most of the ministers, it is true, command the respect and love of their people, but their outward circumstances are often those of poverty and hardship. Many of them are obliged to act during the week as teachers of parochial schools. The religious education of children is another point upon which they most earnestly insist. The profession of a school-teacher is most justly regarded by them as being closely allied to that of the minister, and it is worthy of note, that well-tried and pious school-teachers are received as advisory members at their Synodical meetings. They also aim especially at having, as far as possible, divine service in every congregation on every Sunday, so that ministers are not at liberty to take charge of as many congregations as they may think proper. New congregations in the West, which are not too distant from each other, and wish to be

associated, often build their churches at the most central point, where all may easily assemble every Sunday for worship; but each congregation has nevertheless its own school and teacher. Within the congregations themselves a very strict Church discipline is maintained. These brethren, who, in a measure, commenced the Lutheran Church here anew, have most wisely profited by the sad experience of many of the older congregations of this country, whose constitutions were, in this particular, exceedingly deficient,—a circumstance which has, in many instances, been productive of the most lamentable results. In their Church discipline we regard *private confession** as one of the main points, it being made part of a minister's official duty to acquaint himself, as far as lays in his power, with the spiritual condition of each individual member of his flock. Equally important is the fact, that no individual can, as long as he is a member of any secret society, be admitted as a regular member of the congregation. He may indeed be received for one year on probation, but when that has expired he must come to a decision whether he will dissolve his connection with the secret society or the congregation; a measure, it will easily be perceived, eminently calculated to exclude from a congregation all foreign and disorganizing elements.† Members are of course required to subscribe to the doctrines and constitution of the Church and congregation.

* It is hardly worth while to answer the objections of such as are not able to see the difference between *auricular* confession as practised in the Roman Catholic Church, and *private* confession as practised in the Lutheran Church. The former is used, by a hierarchical priesthood, as a powerful means to control the actions and burden the consciences of men; the latter is a sure sign that the evangelical pastor, in his official intercourse, enjoys the full confidence of the individual members of his flock, and affords him an opportunity of admonishing, advising, comforting, consoling, and of making himself acquainted with the spiritual condition of those whose souls are intrusted to his care.

† To those of our ministers and laymen who have not fully made

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Against these brethren, who have only lately commenced their labors in the United States, and who have, consequently, only but a short time been known amongst us, various complaints have been urged. Some have even converted the term Old Lutheranism into an expression of terror. That this has unfortunately been done under the influence of prejudice, and without first instituting a minute and dispassionate inquiry, cannot be denied. Many of us may have become acquainted with the weak side and repulsive features of Old Lutheranism, whilst we have remained almost entirely ignorant of its strong points, as well as of the character, doctrines, forms, and constitution of the primitive Lutheran Church. One party is continually finding fault with the Creed of these Old Lutherans, whilst, on the other hand, some of the best theological talent is employed to defend, with all the weapons of Scripture and learning, the faith of the fathers as genuine, Christian, and evangelical. Or has belief in the Lutheran doctrines and fidelity to the Confession of the fathers and the Church become a fault in a Lutheran? Or is the bare assertion that the peculiar doctrines of the Lutheran Church are not the doctrines of the Scriptures, sufficient proof that they are not?

We are far from approving everything belonging to these Old Lutheran brethren. Yet it must be borne in mind that their cause met with persecution in Germany, and persecution easily engenders bitterness. They have, moreover, experienced some very severe trials amongst themselves, in consequence of

up their minds about the tendency of secret societies, and who have hitherto not been able to discover any difference between the moral standard set up by the Church, and that set up by secret societies, we would earnestly recommend a highly instructive work, by the Rev. Jas. T. Cooper, Pastor of the Second Assoc. Presbyterian Church, Philada., 1853, on Odd-Fellowship.

which they have become somewhat irritable. Their earnestness, therefore, frequently manifests itself in a somewhat harsh, repulsive, and inclement manner. And who does not know that a persecuted Church has hardly ever recognized any good in those at whose hand it has suffered oppression? These facts account for that immoderate, really foolish, hatred displayed by some Old Lutherans against the German Evangelical Union, and against whatever is even remotely connected with it. This hatred often borders on the ridiculous, as if the Union was responsible for all the misfortunes that have befallen the German Church. Just as ridiculous is it when some designate the difference between Lutheran and not Lutheran, as identical with the difference between Christian and not Christian, as if only the Lutheran Church was entitled to the appellation of *Church*,—a name which they seem to apply in a sense intended to convey the idea, that the difference between their own and other ecclesiastical bodies is not one of different degrees of Christian knowledge and faith, but a difference of *genus*. That among these brethren differences of opinion on minor points should exist, is easily conceivable and quite natural; but that both parties should have exhibited in their controversies, as, for instance, in the discussions above alluded to, as having been carried on between the Synod of Missouri and that of Buffalo, so much bitterness of feeling, is deeply to be regretted. Its effect cannot be other than unfavorable. Surely, no one can be induced to believe that all this severity of language was indulged in out of sincere love to God and man, and that no carnal, earthly passions rankled in the hearts of those who used it. Equally exceptionable is that frigid exclusiveness which they manifest, especially towards all who do not fully consent to whatever the party requires, and who, on that account, often, without even first giving them a fair trial, and endeavoring to become better acquainted with them, are treated and denounced as enemies

of the truth. In like manner do we regard it as a mistake, that their just and commendable attachment to the good old ways and customs should incline some of these brethren to deal somewhat unjustly with whatever is new. As an instance of this we refer to the Hymn Book above alluded to. Highly as we value the old and unadulterated treasures of the hymns of our Lutheran Church, we yet believe that the gracious gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon our Church in our own time are also deserving of notice. But in this too we only regard the *ultra* opinion as a mistake, and an act of injustice against the Church and her members, and a misapprehension of the blessings of God. Wise moderation and the utmost precaution in the application of whatever is new, is proper, yea, even a duty. That, however, these brethren lay too much stress upon the principle of sound doctrine, on mere orthodoxy, on the letter, does not appear from the actual condition, order, activity, and self-denying labors of their congregations. Of the fact that they have at times been somewhat unguarded in their expressions, especially when speaking of the relation of the Symbolical Books to the Scriptures, these brethren have long since been informed by well-disposed friends from without. It will be to their own interest to avoid misapprehension. And it is after all nothing else but this, for the Scriptures, according to their own Creed, give importance to the Symbolical Books, and not the Symbolical Books to the Scriptures. These brethren do, on the whole, not regard the condition of the Lutheran Church during the seventeenth century, when Symbolical orthodoxy had certainly degenerated with thousands into lifeless formality, as their ideal. Some few, indeed, may have fallen into this error, but of the whole it can by no means be alleged. They possess far too much spiritual vivacity to be easily brought into subjection to the mere letter, to fall into another sort of legitimacy. It is with them a peculiar feature that their Synods and Con-

ferences are not merely engaged with questions to which the constitution, the external relation of Church and congregation, may give rise; but they discuss questions from a theologico-scientific point of view in discourses, and in their subsequent deliberations, which may be of importance either to the minister or to the congregation, or to schools, or missions, &c. In this way much spiritual incitement is produced, and one leaves the convention enriched with knowledge.

This Lutheranism of the old unaltered Confession of ancient forms has sprouted like a green bough from the old oak, and has been thriving during the last few years in our midst. It stands by itself, but it also grows by itself. It will yet be subjected to some severe trials, among which the transition of the younger generation from the German mother Church to the English will not be the least. We hope that these brethren will be the less disposed to oppose any obstacles to a transition of the young, the more these will carry with them the old spirit and faith into the new language. The history of the future alone will solve the problem of what degree of vitality there is in this old Lutheran seedling, transplanted into the fertile soil of the New World.

PART THIRD.

THE CENTRE.

THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF THIS SECTION—ITS VITALITY—ITS ORGANS.

WE have thus far endeavored to describe the two parties in the Lutheran Church in the United States, which occupy positions in direct opposition to one another. In this we have more especially aimed at giving prominence to whatever seemed to us characteristic of both, and what might show us, how far two tendencies and parties, calling themselves by one and the

same name, and laboring, each one in its way, to promote the interests of one and the same Church, might differ in their views concerning that Church. But whilst placing beside these two clearly distinct parties a third, which we denominate the *Centre*, we wish, by no means, to be so understood, as if we entertained the opinion that this third party *intended* to occupy a middle, much less a mediating position between the other two; but we call it the Centre, because, on the one hand, it neither sympathizes with the principles of the American Lutheran party, nor, on the other, has it come to a full agreement with the Old Lutherans, whom we have last described. Yet some portions of it approximate the Old Lutherans, maintaining only a few unimportant points of difference.

From all this, it appears that this central party does not in itself form an organically connected whole. It is represented by different Synods, all of which are in no constitutional connection with each other; and also by a considerable number of ministers, in connection with Synods, which are, as such, regarded as belonging to the American Lutheran party, and in connection with the General Synod.

If we would form our estimate of the probable influence of this party—if we may so call it—on the Lutheran Church in this country, from the number of ministers who may be said to belong to it, we would doubtless call it considerable. This is, however, at least in a direct way, not the case. The fact is, we have not here before us an harmonious whole, but rather a multiplicity of parts, which stand loose and unconnected beside each other, the one inclining more to this, the other more to that side, and consequently not united into one body. They only agree in this, namely, that they have, at least thus far, not positively committed themselves in favor of either one or the other side. It is also worthy of remark, that it is precisely in this central party where both languages, the German and English, are particularly required for church service, whilst among the “American Lutherans” almost

nothing but English is necessary. Among the Old Lutherans, the German has thus far been exclusively required.

The undecided attitude which this middle party between the "American Lutherans" and Symbolical Lutherans has assumed, makes it unnecessary to enlarge to any considerable extent on the peculiarities of this tendency. Some seem to be a sort of eclectics, who select from the two opposite systems, whatever appears to them most useful and beneficial. So also do we find here, what is indeed the case everywhere, that historical relations have to a considerable extent influenced the condition of the Church and the formation of views on church matters.

It is a circumstance worthy of note, that the oldest Lutheran Synod, the "*Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States*," belongs to this central party. Within its bounds once labored the man whose name is now and ever will continue to be dear to every member of the Lutheran Church, the Rev. H. M. Muhlenberg, D.D. What this faithful servant of God, together with other fathers of the Church, who have long since entered into their rest, disposed and established in and for the Church, when they came from a far country to lay the foundation of our Lutheran Zion in this western land, has continued to exert an influence on the mother Synod. It is true, that during the interim between their day and ours, many changes have taken place within the Synod they have founded, and some things have taken a different direction from what they had intended; yet with all this, no essential principle laid down by them has ever been formally abandoned, whatever liberty some individual members may have assumed, or however mild she may have been in the enforcement of obedience to old established principles. Even the principle laid down in her ministerial constitution, that the discussions should be conducted in the German language, has not been changed by a formal resolution of Synod, though in practice both languages are used.

Our business here is not with her past, but her present con-

dition. The Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States has already several times taken occasion clearly to define its *doctrinal position*. It declared in 1850, "that it had never renounced the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church as a faithful exposition of the Word of God, but that it continues to regard them as a faithful elucidation of the Word of God." In like manner did this Synod, in resolutions passed in 1853, give special prominence to the great importance which has been attached to the Symbolical Books from the beginning, declaring, at the same time, the Confessional Books, the very means to bind ministers to the Scriptures, and guard them against misapprehension, error, and unbelief. The Synod has consequently earnestly called upon its ministers and candidates for the ministry to endeavor to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with our Symbolical Books, an acquaintance which, with many, is entirely wanting; and this is the only reason why many are ignorant of their high value, as well as of what their Lutheran mother Church in matters of faith really teaches. And it is with this the Synod declares, that it desires no agreement with churchly orthodoxy, except such as may be the result of conviction, produced by investigating the original sources; but it is, at the same time, fully convinced that no one can read those testimonials of the faith of the fathers, without becoming convinced that they were firmly grounded upon the Holy Scriptures. The Synod does, however, not require its applicants for membership to subscribe the Augsburg Confession, but receives candidates by examination and a colloquium, and members of any other Lutheran ministerium upon the presentation of an honorable dismissal from the body with which they stood last connected, without further inquiry concerning their orthodoxy. Their practice is accordingly very liberal, and far removed from exclusive measures. This Synod has also, after a long period of separation, reunited, in 1853, with the General Synod, with the explicit proviso, however, that in so doing it does not wish to be regarded as having

surrendered any one of those principles hitherto maintained by it. The Synod has cherished and continues to cherish the hope, that the friends and defenders of the old Confession are increasing in the General Synod, and that this body, together with the whole Church, will become more and more in spirit and character, what it is in name, Lutheran.

That the tendency of the Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States is conservative, appears also from the fact of its having retained the use of the Liturgy as an old Lutheran, or rather as an old Christian custom, and in its latest issue, of 1855, reintroduced much which, at one time, had been the standing custom of the Church, but which had, in consequence of the decline of Church life in Germany and in this country, during the last hundred years, fallen into disuse. And whatever objections critics may feel disposed to urge against this new edition, it is nevertheless one of the many signs of the times, that the Church is returning to the consciousness of her peculiarity, and that she is, after years of misapprehension, learning to admire and love many of her ancient treasures—her ancient customs.

Of this Synod it must, however, also be said, that, whilst it gives utterance in this to the correct Lutheran and churchly principle, it is exceedingly lax in its execution and practice. For whilst, in some congregations, the Liturgy, and now again, responses and collects are used, at least during the principal Sunday service, they are in others altogether dispensed with. This state of things must continue to exist as long as our young men, who dedicate themselves to the service of the Church, are not accustomed to these ancient Lutheran usages, and instructed according to correct Church principles, during their years of preparatory study. They should be taught how beneficially the use of the Liturgy will operate as a preventive of those dangers which flow from the abuse of liberty; how it may be made, through the co-operation of the minister, the

choir and congregation, to enliven public service, and how each individual member, to whom the Church, at the same time, gives in the Liturgy a means for private and family worship, may be brought, by means of this common Church prayer-book, into closer union with the Church itself.

How little exclusiveness, notwithstanding its stricter Lutheran tendency, is exhibited by this Synod, appears from the fact, that it has never objected to German Reformed ministers occupying its pulpits, wherever a suitable opportunity for so doing presented itself. But with the looseness of those Lutheran brethren, who even invite the avowed enemies of infant baptism into their pulpits, it would never sympathize. Whilst the Old Lutheran brethren of the Synod of Missouri admit none but the hymns composed by Lutherans into their collection, the Hymn-book published by the Synod in 1849, and circulated by many thousand copies throughout the country, contains a goodly number of the best church hymns of German Reformed authors, such as Tersteegen, Lavater, and other highly gifted and pious men.

In this connection must also be mentioned the "Joint Synod of Ohio." This Synod has in its whole spirit and character many things in common with the Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States. In its constitution, adopted in 1853, and somewhat modified in 1854, it expresses itself thus: "The Joint Synod of Ohio consists of delegates from the Evangelical Lutheran Synods, at present in connection with the existing Synod of Ohio, and of all such as may from time to time adopt this constitution, and with us maintain the doctrines of the Gospel, according to the testimony of the collective body of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, or who, in their own constitution, recognize and hold fast the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Smaller Catechism, in the sense and spirit of the other symbols."

From this it appears that the Synods in connection with the

"Joint Synod of Ohio," adhere strictly to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, giving to them their unconditional assent, as far as the doctrinal principles of the Church are concerned. These brethren are conscious, as far as the action of their Synods may be regarded as the expression of their opinion, that they are more decided in their adhesion to the confessional writings of the Church than the Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States. Yet there exists between both bodies a friendly and intimate relation, and they have even co-operated in enterprises of general interest, such as, for instance, in the compilation of the new German Hymn-book and Liturgy, in which they were also joined by the Synod of New York.

But whilst the Synods in connection with the Joint Synod of Ohio agree, as far as the confessional documents are concerned, with the stricter Lutherans above alluded to, there still exists, between both parties, some material differences. One of the ablest, best-informed, and most gifted among the Ohio brethren lately expressed himself in regard to this matter thus: "There is a considerable difference in temper and practice between us on the one hand and the Missouri and Buffalo Synods on the other. In practice we are *less rigid*, and in temper we endeavor to avoid their almost absolute exclusiveness and uncharitableness, their unnecessary severity and unkindness. As to the Missouri Synod, it always seemed to me that their congregational, democratic principles, and the well-known arbitrary, imperious course of many of their ministers, are anything but consistent." Again: "In regard to the question about the Church and the ministerial office, our Synod never has given any special expression, as we never had occasion to do so. But so far as I am acquainted with the views of the brethren, I think most of them look upon the Missouri and Buffalo positions, as far as developed, as *extreme* in the democratic and hierarchic directions. Of course I do not mean

to say, that this statement will apply with equal force to all our members, or that it represents the views of each individual, but I think I may safely say, that it is a correct representation of the position of our Synod as a whole."

We do not err in adding, that there exists between these brethren and the Old Lutherans also this difference, namely, that the former have, in all matters pertaining to public worship, in the observance of the forms, formerly in general use in the Lutheran Church, such as crosses in churches, lighted candles upon the altar, &c., expressed themselves decidedly in favor of the customs prevalent in the American Protestant Churches, whilst the latter seem more disposed to oppose themselves also in this to the current of the Protestant system in America, yet in such a way as not to surrender the Lutheran principle of Evangelical liberty in things non-essential. The Ohio brethren are like the Synod of Pennsylvania, &c., conservative, holding fast in common with her to what the Lutheran Church from the beginning regarded as essential, namely, the faith, the genuine Lutheran Confession—nay, they seem, at this time, to take hold, with renewed devotion, of the testimony of the fathers concerning the faith. These two sections, though practically differing from the Old Lutherans of Missouri, &c., yet theoretically agree with them in their disapprobation in regard to the employment of what are known as "*Methodistical new measures*," which are more or less artificial, and have upon the whole, in their results, by no means been justified as agencies for awakening and sustaining vital piety, and are far from being in accordance with the spirit of Whitefield and Wesley themselves. In this they are also more especially strictly distinct from that party represented by the Lutheran Observer.

Among these must also be particularly included the Tennessee Synod, which has long been and is now persisting in maintaining a separate position, but which is at the same time noted

for its strict adherence to the Symbolical Books.* From the midst of this orthodox Synod an English translation of the entire Book of Concord has gone forth. Latterly the way for a closer and more intimate relation between this and the Missouri Synod seems to be preparing; for the latter has publicly expressed its joy at the constancy with which the Tennessee Synod has adhered to Lutheran orthodoxy, and this one sent a delegate (1856) to the Western District Synod of the Joint Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States; which act, expressive of good feeling, was reciprocated in 1856. We feel justified in numbering this strictly Symbolical Synod of Tennessee among the integral parts of the central party here in question, because, though true to the Lutheran faith, it has relinquished the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Lutheran Church; for this Synod conforms even to the custom, peculiarly Reformed, of breaking the bread at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. There are besides this other peculiarities not necessary to mention.

There has also sprung up a Synod on the western shore of Lake Michigan, the Synod of Wisconsin, which must be ranked among this central party, though in a doctrinal point of view not strictly Symbolical, according to the acceptation of this term among Symbolists, but which in reference to Church customs adheres both in theory and practice to the principle of Evangelical liberty. This seems indeed necessary, because that difficult field of labor embraces emigrant Germans from all the different parts of Germany.

* An interesting report on this Synod is given in a small book with the title, "Short Account of the Business Transactions of the first Conference held by the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministers, in the State of Tennessee, July 17th, 1820." Here we find, amongst other things, "Important Objections against the Proposed Constitution of the General Synod." The German of the book is not classical, but there is a good deal of sound reasoning in it. It was printed in 1821.

To this same tendency also belongs the Synod of Texas, which carries on the work of the ministry of the Gospel among the many emigrant Germans settled in that State.

This also seems to be the proper place to speak of our Lutheran brethren from Sweden and Norway, who have settled particularly in the northwestern part of our country, and have, during a short space of time, organized flourishing congregations, built churches, and promise to add considerable increase to the Lutheran Church in this country.*

In addition to these Synods, which we mention, notwithstanding their dissimilarity, as in connection with this central party, we must also call attention to single individuals, both ministers and laymen, who, whilst in connection with Synods predominantly American or New School Lutheran, must nevertheless be classed among the central party. Also among these—and they include men of considerable importance in the Church—there is again an essential difference, that must not be overlooked. Some of these regard doctrines peculiarly Lutheran in the main correct, but they are far from desiring synodical connection only with such brethren as entertain views similar to their own, in every particular. They believe that, on the whole, the entire current of the Church points towards a restoration of the ancient faith and customs, but they neither wish forcibly to retard this peaceful development, nor accelerate it with undue precipitancy. Others again are not fully convinced of the correctness of all the doctrines composing the Lutheran Creed, but hold to those principles of the doctrinal system of Christianity which are indispensably necessary to salvation, and accordingly occupy in this the stand-point of the New School Lutherans. But they again

* It is to be deplored that in former times a goodly number of Scandinavians and their descendants connected themselves with the Episcopal Church, and that seems to be the case at the present time. So much for the attractions of the principle of Episcopacy.

differ from these, first, because they either approve not at all, or at best only under very great restrictions, the introduction of new measures, and secondly, because they pay deference to the principle of tolerance and conservatism to such a degree, that they cannot see why strict Old Lutherans and decided American or New School Lutherans may not co-operate as members of the same Church, Synod, and General Synod. They are therefore opposed to any measure that might make a rupture in the General Synod unavoidable, as for instance the Definite Platform. They wish to tolerate and be tolerated.

Finally, we must here also give a place to those,—for where else could they find one?—who are at present in a sort of transition state. They are beginning to become better acquainted with the character of their Lutheran mother Church. They have lately become convinced of the fact, that their Church has a peculiar character in point of doctrine and other respects; they also see that these peculiarities have been greatly misunderstood and misrepresented, and they feel the injustice of regarding them as worthless, merely on the authority of other Churches, or individuals imbued with principles foreign to the Lutheran Church.

That in this party, with all its differences and shades of opinions, a considerable degree of vitality is found, is a fact in proof of which its enemies afford the clearest testimony. For the originators of the Definite Platform made this one of the strongest points in their defence, when accused of disturbing the peace of the Church,—that they had been compelled to take this step, because by many who had hitherto sided with the principles of American Lutheranism, a reaction in favor of the Symbolical Books and Old Lutheran customs had undeniably taken place, and the ultimate ascendancy of this tendency was consequently to be apprehended. The reasons why such a surprisingly large number of ministers, and among these very many of the most influential men, did not favor

the intended alteration of the Old Lutheran Confession, are various; but among all, respect for the venerable document had its influence; and even those who, in some doctrinal points, agree with the author of the Definite Platform, would not break loose from the conservative party, concerning which they confidently believe, that they mean it well with the Church, and that they possess the right, as Lutherans, of continuing to build the Church upon its ancient and unaltered basis. The conservative party has, therefore, on the whole, come forth victorious from this Platform controversy, despite all the efforts put forth by the Lutheran Observer to influence public opinion in its favor.

One of the principal signs of the vitality of this central party, which, in opposition to New Lutherans, pursues a conservative course, is its literary theological activity. We have been credibly informed that a surprisingly large number of copies of the Book of Concord have been circulated among such of our ministers and students as were formerly scarcely acquainted with it by name. From this party have also emanated a number of publications in defence of the Lutheran doctrines, such as *The Broken Platform*, a *Plea for the Augsburg Confession*; yea, even the Board of Publication, composed, as it is, of men of opposite views, ventured, in its fidelity to conservative principles, to stand up in opposition to the plan proposed by the New School Lutherans.

In this party is also found a great deal of interest in the best productions of ancient and modern German Evangelical theologians. If we examine the libraries of most of those among our ministers who have received an English education, and who officiate in the English language, we are surprised to find how few Lutheran works they really contain, whilst we, on the contrary, everywhere encounter the popular English works of such men as Dwight, Clark, Scott, and others. Now these, it is true, contain much that is good, but, at the same time,

also much that is unlutheran; and the works of Dr. S. S. Schmucker, which are generally found along with them, are pervaded by this same heterogeneous spirit. The newly-awakened interest of the English Churches in Great Britain and America in the writings of believing German theologians, whose country has again been liberated from the blighting curse of rationalism, also exerts an influence upon the Lutheran Church in this country. And who, indeed, should feel more deeply interested than we, who are not only their kindred by blood and national origin, but members of the same ecclesiastical family, and bound together by the same name?

It is, therefore, delightful to see that not only the demand for German theological, exegetical, dogmatical, and historical theological manuals is increasing, but that also some of those very theologians, in connection with this central and conservative party, have commenced to translate for the use of our ministers and laity some of the best German works. Among these may be numbered the contributions by Professor H. J. Schmidt, D.D., in the *Evangelical Review*, from Thomasius; and that most excellent translation of "Dr. J. H. Kurtz's Manual of Sacred History," by Rev. Prof. C. F. Schaffer, D.D., of Gettysburg. Other works, such as "Ledderhose's Life of Melancthon," translated by Rev. G. F. Krotel; or narratives connected with the history of the Reformation, such as Dr. J. G. Morris, of Baltimore, has furnished us with, are eminently calculated to arouse the sympathy of our ministers and laity in behalf of the history and spirit of the Lutheran Church. Other works of a similar character are in course of preparation. The Board of Publication, which, through the *Home Journal*, endeavors to furnish our families with a pure and healthy religious literature, has an eye to the wants of our ministers and laity, and is able to advance the cause of practical piety as well as that of theology, if the Church should favor it with its patronage, and continue to encourage it. It has made arrangements

for the translation into the English language of at least part of Luther's works. Other smaller works of an entirely practical character have already been extensively circulated throughout the Church. Here we must also mention those translations from old and new Lutheran works, which appear from time to time in the Lutheran Standard, and in the Missionary, and which are admirably calculated to explain the Lutheran doctrines, and defend them especially against the erroneous charges preferred against them by the Definite Platform. In the Standard we find many very instructive articles, explanatory of peculiarly Lutheran doctrines. In the Missionary have appeared, over the signature of that able writer, C. P. K., of Pittsburg, extracts from Luther's works, which cannot fail to bring to light the misrepresentations circulated by the Definite Platform and its defenders.

That this central party is, moreover, deeply interested in the building up of the Church is also abundantly evident. The Ohio Synods have in Columbus a College (Capitol University) and Seminary, which appear in a prosperous condition. In these institutions instruction is imparted in both the German and English languages. The Synod of Pennsylvania and adjacent States has only recently founded the Professorship of the German language and literature in the College and Seminary at Gettysburg. Only the Synod of Tennessee has hitherto shown a singular aversion to seminaries under the direction of Synods. These Synods also take a very active part in supporting and educating young men for the Gospel ministry, as well as in sustaining the cause of Foreign and Domestic Missions. Of course, the means necessary to the undertaking of extensive enterprises are, in many places, still wanting, especially among congregations composed principally of emigrant Germans. There is also a great scarcity of ministers. In many places too, it must be confessed, there is still a want of proper zeal, still an unwillingness manifested to employ part of the

means with which the Giver of all good has so richly endowed us to the promotion of his kingdom on earth. This applies more especially to some parts of Pennsylvania. Church discipline is not enforced as it should be. The resolutions of Synods do not command sufficient respect. Abuses of long standing, and which are not unfrequently retained even under the pretext of law and justice, are abolished with difficulty. Many congregations that are actually wealthy do not even manifest sufficient interest in and attachment to the Word of God to give their ministers a decent salary, and thus secure to themselves their services regularly every Lord's day. They are satisfied with having public worship once in three or four weeks. Ministers, consequently, receiving from each of their congregations only a very small salary, which barely enables them to maintain themselves and families, to say nothing of laying by something for the infirmities of age, are under the necessity of taking charge of so many congregations, that they find it impossible properly to attend to their spiritual wants, and hence the condition of such congregations is not what is desirable that it should be. The scarcity of ministers is, of course, partly the cause of this. And the cause of this again is, among others, the difficult and irksome position which most ministers sustain in their congregations in consequence of such a state of things. For with the almost certain prospect of encountering innumerable obstacles, many of our most promising and talented young men are deterred from devoting themselves to the service of the Church. Still there are some signs that a brighter day for the Church is dawning, notwithstanding the circumstance that much of that zeal, which characterizes the German Old Lutheran and American New Lutheran congregations, is wanting in many places where this central conservative party has obtained a footing.

A few words remain yet to be said in regard to the public organs of this entire party. Among these we reckon the Evan-

gelical Review, a quarterly, published at Gettysburg, by the Rev. Drs. C. P. Krouth and W. M. Reynolds, and devoted to the interests of theology and the Church; and as far as its scientific character is concerned, it may challenge comparison with any similar publication of other denominations. Its efficiency, however, in promoting the cause of science in the Church, and in keeping up a churchly feeling, might be increased yet more, if our ministers generally took more interest in theological investigations. But with many, alas, the custom of relinquishing their studies immediately after having left the Seminary still prevails. They stop with whatever they have there acquired, and manifest not sufficient disposition to increase their knowledge in exegesis, dogmatics, Church history, &c. The consequence often is, that whilst these men yield up their entire strength to the performance of the practical duties of their office, this scientific stagnation becomes not unfrequently the hot-bed of the most dangerous onesidedness and prejudices; for the less scientific clearness one possesses, the more apt is he to be influenced in his official conduct by the passing current of public opinion,—as is sufficiently evidenced by the wild fire of New-measurism,—and the mischief, that results from the want of a clear and solid theory in matters pertaining to religion, is visible in those convulsive and spasmodic manifestations which ever and anon appear in the Church.

The weekly papers which belong to this party, and which, at the same time, reflect the different views that prevail among its different parts, are the Lutheran Standard, published in Columbus, by the Synod of Ohio. It of course occupies the strictly Symbolical stand-point of the Ohio brethren, and regards it as its mission to confess and defend the genuine Lutheran faith, and the Lutheran Observer finds in him not only an honest but a well-armed opponent, of whom he might learn much. Its decidedly instructive character is the strong point of the Standard.

In Pittsburg has been published, as a weekly paper, since the beginning of the present year (1856), *The Missionary*, edited by Rev. W. A. Passavant, with the assistance of able hands. Brother Passavant is the well-known *Missionary* of the law of charity, a distinction to which his undertakings in behalf of the sick and poor, widows and orphans, fully entitle him. The *Missionary* stands, in a Confessional point of view, on the basis of the Augsburg Confession, is predominantly popular in its character—for which reason it stands aloof from literary brawls—bears patiently the rancorous and extremely undignified attacks of the *Lutheran Observer*, circulates by means of small but powerful doses a great deal of correct information in reference to the frequent misrepresentations and distortions of the faith of the Reformers and Church fathers, and gives besides a large amount of useful and desirable Church and missionary intelligence.

A few German papers only remain yet to be mentioned in connection with this part of our subject. Among these the "*Lutherische Herold*" of Mr. H. Ludwig, of New York, possesses the strictest Confessional character, originality, and spirit, but is at the same time tolerant. The "*Kirchenbote*" of Gettysburg must also not be overlooked. What its doctrinal stand-point in the Lutheran Church really is, we have not, as yet, been able to discover, but it is honestly endeavoring both to make and preserve peace, in neither of which, however, it seems to be at all times successful. Rev. S. K. Brobst, of Allentown, Pa., appears to be gifted with the happy talent of promoting, in the most popular manner, sound Church views and life among the old and young, in his publications, the "*Jugend Freund*," *Missions Blaetter* "*Almanac*," &c.

PART FOURTH.

THE SPIRIT AND LIFE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

IN what we have thus far said, our endeavor has been to present a picture of the Lutheran Church in the United States which should correspond with its present condition. We have noticed the different tendencies that prevail within its bounds, and in doing so acknowledged the good, and condemned what to us seemed reprehensible, regardless alike of praise or censure.

From these foregoing considerations we have learned that the present agitated condition of the Church is principally owing to the influence of two causes. The one of these we found in what was originally in many respects altogether foreign to Lutheranism, in the peculiar doctrines, manner of worship, and spirit of Puritanism, and partly also of Methodism; the other, in the revival of that kind of Lutheranism that prevailed at the time when the Lutheran Church was first organized. The first tendency has for years been in existence in this country. It appeared to be gradually gaining such undisputed dominion over the Lutheran Church in the United States that it already began to triumph in its power. Yet there have always been some sections in the Lutheran Church where a certain degree of conservatism saved many of its peculiarities from being sacrificed at the shrine of a strange spirit. Now, however, a decidedly Lutheran tendency has again sprung up, armed with the strong weapons of science, and displaying an energy by no means to be despised. This regards the relinquishment of the peculiarities of the mother Church as an act of unfaithfulness against that legacy which

the Lord had intrusted to its keeping, and endeavors to resist the further encroachments of foreign influences.

In order, however, to complete our picture, it is necessary that we should also inquire, what was the condition of the Lutheran Church when it was first organized, in this country, into an ecclesiastical body, and what was its spirit, and what were its principles in regard to doctrines, worship, and other matters entering into the constitution of a Church establishment. To these questions we must devote our attention for a few moments, and that the more so, because it is well known that each one of the opposing parties in the Church is constantly appealing to that time in support of its principles, so that those men, who eminently deserve to be regarded the founders of the Lutheran Church in this country, are spoken of on all sides in terms of the highest praise, and with profound veneration.

It is not our intention to present the reader with a comprehensive history of the first period of the Lutheran Church in this country.* Our object will have been gained, if we show from indisputable facts what her character in this country was about the middle of the last century, the period of the formation of the first Synod (1748), up to its close.

CHAPTER I.

EXTERNAL HISTORICAL RELATIONS.

THE Lutheran Church in this country had, prior to the formation of the first Synod, in 1748, not been regularly organ-

* We are happy to state that a History of the Lutheran Church in North America, by Rev. C. W. Schaeffer, D.D., of Germantown, is in an advanced state of preparation. This work will be welcomed by all who take an interest in our Lutheran Zion.

ized. The first Lutherans, who had settled here about the middle of the preceding century, had emigrated from Holland. Subsequently, however, some arrived also from Sweden, Salzburg, and other parts of Germany. These, though members of one and the same church, did yet not stand in any regular connection with each other, partly on account of their difference in language, and partly on account of their geographical situations, they being scattered over the entire extent of country reaching from Maine to Georgia, in comparison to which their numbers were too inconsiderable. The supply of ministers, especially, was far too inadequate for such an extensive territory, there being at the time of the formation of the first Lutheran Synod, only eleven regular Lutheran ministers in North America.

At this period the majority of Lutherans were *German*. And the Lutheran Church has, to this day, received from no quarter greater accessions than from Germany. It was accordingly necessary that they should also be supplied with ministers from the mother country, and these were principally the men who formed and fashioned the Lutheran Church of that time.

It is easy to be perceived, how important, for the future, the circumstance would prove, that German theologians arrived, just at that time, from the old Fatherland, to organize the Lutheran Church in this country.

German theology had undergone, during the latter quarter of the seventeenth century, some very important transformations. Prior to that time had prevailed that kind of orthodoxy which had converted what in itself was really good into a fault, not without disastrous consequences. For however necessary it is that, in the kingdom of God, a strict watch over the purity of doctrine be observed, and every error that intrudes upon the sanctuary of the Christian Confession be carefully excluded, this is far from being all that is required. One

may insist on purity in doctrine with the wild enthusiasm of a fanatic, and yet manifest but little concern about spiritual life. The mind may agree with every part of the orthodox Confession, and in no instance deviate a hair's breadth from any jot or tittle therein contained, whilst at the same time the conscience may sleep the sleep of death. This would be like a government which, whilst it was securely guarding its fortresses, was permitting the enemy to overrun and pillage and burn its towns and villages and farms; or like a physician curing the head of his patient, whilst forgetting that his heart too is diseased. It is an acknowledged fact that this was, during the seventeenth century, alas! but too much the case in the Church in Germany. Zeal for orthodoxy had called forth much contention about words, and recriminations about heresy, whilst the requirements of the Gospel in regard to Christian life were too much overlooked. Opposition to this perversity was not wanting. Many ministers aimed faithfully at making purity of doctrine productive of practical piety. For this Arnd wrote his book on "True Christianity," and H. Mueller complained that whilst controversies in regard to Christian faith abounded, vital godliness was wanting.

The Lutheran Church was, however, made the scene of an important internal commotion, mainly through the divinely approved labors of Philip Jacob Spener, a man of learning, as distinguished for his living piety as he was noted for his orthodoxy, and who labored, both as a writer and ecclesiastic of high rank for the revival and restoration of spiritual life. He laid great stress upon the vitality of faith in the hearts of believers, and upon the influence of doctrinal knowledge on the lives of Christians. He accordingly insisted upon an earnest application of the doctrine of salvation to man's condition. He insisted upon a different, more pungent, and practically useful manner of preaching, a more impressive mode of instructing the young; he desired that preaching should arouse

the sinner out of sleep, lead him to repentance, and convince him that it is impossible to have the assurance of the grace of God without repentance and faith. He made new application of the principle of the universal priesthood of all believing Christians, and consequently laid stress justly upon the laity ministering in the family and actively participating in all truly Christian enterprises. He was sensible of the fact that the real influence of the minister does not only depend upon his orthodoxy, but also and especially upon a personal living piety and experience of the grace of God in his own heart.

The influence which Spener had exerted was very extensive, but of a twofold kind—one producing a healthy, the other a sickly and pernicious effect.

In regard to the latter, the following is worthy of notice. Spener and his most able friends had indeed regarded the condition of the Church as they, at that time, found it, as being most lamentable. But they were very far from laying violent hands on its foundation, viz., the Lutheran Confession, of whose Scriptural correctness they were fully convinced. Others, however, did not rest the matter here; they were not satisfied with making the proper practical use of the truth as laid down in the Confession of the Church, but, being influenced by a morbid spiritualism, they despised the purity and importance of dogmas, laid the entire stress on revival sermons, and, by these means, fell into that affected manner of devotion generally known by the name of *Pietism*, and which possesses, among much that is good, also much that is only seemingly so, and spurious. But the worst of it was, that the disregard which churchly orthodoxy now experienced at the hands of the Pietists, many of whom actually abhorred it, prepared the way for the introduction of more and more heterodox views into theology and piety, by which means Christianity in Germany suffered immense loss. Whoever is acquainted with the history of Protestantism knows that the rise of rationalism

among theologians and irreligion among the people were simultaneous with the decline of the authority of the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church in Germany.

Alongside of these deeply to be regretted results that grew out of the reforming activity of Spener, for which that faithful servant of Christ is, however, by no means to be held responsible, others of a salutary and beneficial nature must not be forgotten. Wherever faith is quickened, there also it has never yet failed to manifest its fruit-bearing power. This was the case in Germany. There were many souls who, through the instrumentality of Spener, had been stirred up to a new life, and had begun to esteem and love the Confession of the Church, because it only now became a capital in their hands, bearing abundant interest for themselves and others. What glorious reminiscences, for instance, cluster around the name of A. H. Franké, and around the institutions in Hallé associated with that name. Faith had again commenced to work by love. Efforts were made to educate pious young men for the Gospel ministry, to convert the common schools into nurseries of religion, and to minister to the relief of the poor and destitute. Orphan houses were founded, Bible Societies were organized, Missionaries were sent out to foreign lands. And amidst all this the cause of scientific education was not suffered to fall into neglect. Strict attention was paid to the study of the ancient languages, which had been so highly recommended by Luther, on account of the important influence they exert, especially in the study of theology. Hallé, too, was the place where was first successfully tried the experiment, afterwards imitated by other nations, namely, that of diffusing by means of national public schools a general knowledge of the natural and technical sciences.

There, at Hallé, in Saxony, in that nursery of Christian training, under the eyes of the ablest men, associated with lovely youths who had consecrated themselves to the service

of the Saviour, we find engaged, up to the spring of 1742, in the capacity of an instructor to the poor orphans, whom Christian charity had collected, fed, clothed, and taught, a young man, imbued with the same spirit that pervaded that institution, vigorous and sprightly, richly gifted and highly cultivated, and standing at the very portal of a long and prosperous life of public usefulness. The Heavenly Gardener, according to his choice, transplants this young tree from its parent soil to a new world. The history of the life of that young man will ever be inseparably connected with the history of the Lutheran Church in North America, and every Evangelical Lutheran heart is made glad by the sound of the name of H. M. Muhlenberg.

From the same circle in whom a living faith worked by love, other witnesses of the truth have gone forth, whose memory will ever be blessed in the Lutheran Church.

CHAPTER II.

INTERNAL CONDITION.

WE have seen that the reforming activity of Spener had infused a new life into the Lutheran Church in Germany, and also that it had not been his intention to put piety in the room of an orthodox Christian faith, but rather, that faith should become productive of life, and theory be carried out into practice. We know, that the consolidation and organization of the Lutheran Church in this country, as it was finally effected by Muhlenberg and his co-laborers, must be regarded as an historical result of that revival which from the beginning to the close of the first half of the last century pervaded the German Lutheran Church. God has so ordered it, that that missionary activity which, after Spener, had been newly aroused

in the Lutheran Church in Germany, should become a blessing to this Western Hemisphere.

The question now with us is, in what spirit and in accordance with what principles was the Lutheran Church in America organized by H. M. Muhlenberg, D.D., and his co-laborers? We are already prepared to give the result of our investigations in reference to these questions, and maintain,

A. It is an established fact, that those men aimed at neither more nor less than to place the Lutheran Church in this country upon the same doctrinal basis upon which it rested in the German Fatherland, namely, upon the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as laid down in the Symbolical Books. This was in reality the foundation upon which Lutheran congregations in this country had been established before the year 1748, the year in which the first Lutheran Synod in America was organized, some receiving the collective body of the Lutheran Symbols, whilst others, as the Swedes, preferred more especially the Symbols officially recognized by the Church of their country, but none of them ever protested against any of the Symbolical Books, or against any part of their contents.

B. This Lutheran orthodoxy, however, was by no means merely a dead-letter service, or the means of keeping alive polemical discussions on the subject of theology, but there were living faith and energetic and powerful exhortations to repentance and faith. There was, it is true, on the one hand, no disposition to relinquish anything that was peculiarly Lutheran, and, on the other, to decry men of opposite views as heretical. These church-fathers, on the contrary, sustained the most friendly relation to members of other denominations, and rejoiced in their sympathy and advice. They moreover used their best endeavors to transplant the Old Lutheran faith into their English congregations, an example which posterity did unfortunately not always follow.

C. It is a settled fact, that the use of the liturgy, responses,

&c., was at that time regarded a genuine Lutheran custom, and as such established in our congregations, and by them regularly observed. In this, however, no undue bias prevailed. Extemporaneous prayer was made use of during public worship by the minister, and on other occasions, such as in family worship or private religious meetings, also by lay-members. In matters pertaining to ceremonies the Lutheran principle of evangelical liberty generally prevailed; and whilst retaining some of those customs which distinguish Lutherans from the Reformed, they accommodated themselves in regard to others to the peculiar circumstances by which they were, in a new country, necessarily surrounded.

D. One of the principal subjects which, from the first, engaged the attention of these fathers, and in which they manifested the deepest interest, was the religious education of the young. Not only did they everywhere attach the greatest importance to the erection of parochial schools, with the view of securing to their children religious instruction generally, not only did they insist on imparting to their youths a thorough and saving knowledge of the doctrines of salvation, preparatory to confirmation, but they even established regular catechization on the Lord's day, in which even the older members of the Church were sometimes required to take part.

E. What Spener had already aimed at in Germany, and what is truly evangelical, namely, the active participation of the laity in the government of the congregation and Church, our fathers succeeded in accomplishing in the organization of the Lutheran Church in this country. But whilst doing so, they did not, in a genuine Lutheran spirit, lose sight of the difference between the *ordo clericus* and *laicus*, and therefore separated, as a distinct unit, the Ministerium, i. e. that body composed exclusively of regularly ordained ministers, from the other distinct unit, composed of regularly ordained ministers and lay-delegates, assigning to each its special business.

This introduction of Presbyterian government was the most significant change experienced by the Lutheran Church at the time of its transplantation from the Old to the New World.

In these points we believe that we have presented what was substantially the prevailing spirit of the Lutheran Church in this country during the latter half of the last century. It may, however, not be without interest if, in addition to what has already been said, something more be appended in illustration of the views already expressed. And what we are about to say may, at the same time, be regarded as a necessary supplement to the portraiture drawn by the Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D., in his "American Lutheran Church."

We here confine ourselves principally to the time of the Patriarch Muhlenberg, as the period of the actual formation and organization of the Lutheran Church in this country. This we denominate the patriarchal age of the Lutheran Church in America. Dr. S. S. Schmucker, however, continues this age down into the present century, and even regards as an evidence of progress the circumstance, that "about the beginning of this century they ceased, in fact, to require assent even to the Augsburg Confession at licensure and ordination, and demanded only faith in the Word of God, thus practically rejecting, as they had a right to do, all the Symbolical Books as tests."

Now, to all this we protest; not, indeed, because the broad sense in which the learned Doctor uses the term *Patriarch*, holds out the not distant prospect of himself being numbered as one of them; but because we desire to see among *patriarchs* a little more agreement in opinions and sentiments, and, also, because we sincerely believe that that latitudinarianism which began to prevail at the beginning of the present century, was very far from being an evidence of progress in our Church, or a proof that she has achieved a victory; but rather that it was the means of throwing open her gates to a spirit

foreign to herself, however sincere and well-meant the intentions of those, to whose care her interests were at that time confided, may have been. For the setting aside the Confession of our Church, in the Church itself, is equivalent to a declaration that it is worthless. If it contains the truth, it cannot, for the truth's sake and on account of its historical importance, be worthless. Should we nevertheless regard it as being unnecessary, we lay ourselves open to the charge of professing to possess the truth in greater purity than is set forth in the Church's Confession. But such a degree of confidence no believing theologian has ever yet ventured to exercise in that theological science, which dates its rise from the beginning of the present century, and which has become proverbial for its wide-spreading rationalism. Yet we are happy in being able to add, that there are many theologians who have not bowed to this science of unbelief.

For us it is important to know, that the Lutheran Church in America was, from the beginning, built upon the old foundation of the Gospel as interpreted by the collective body of the Symbolical Books, and that ministers and parochial schoolmasters were required to preach and teach in accordance with them.

As regards the mode and manner of using the Symbolical Books during Dr. H. M. Muhlenberg's time, the following may serve as an example. In the large work, entitled, "*Acta Historico-Ecclesiastica; or, Intelligence collected from the latest Church History, Weimar,*" we have the following account of the year 1749, from North America. "Mr. Weigand has hitherto been engaged in school-teaching, at Raritan, Pennsylvania. When Mr. Muhlenberg, who had charge of that congregation, upon visiting it, learned *that he held sound doctrines*, devoted himself diligently to the instruction of the young, and had led an orderly course of life, he asked the congregation whether they would not, in consideration of his own

inability to attend to them at so great a distance, permit him to ordain Weigand as their pastor, and give him a regular call. When they had expressed themselves satisfied with this arrangement, Mr. Muhlenberg wrote a call in the English language, in which he was charged to promulgate sound doctrine, according to the word of the Apostles and Prophets and the *collective body of our Symbolical Books*, but with the condition, that he would *teach and live according to that Confession*. Mr. Muhlenberg thereupon asked him publicly, in the church and before the congregation, whether he would with God's grace and assistance do this? Whereupon he not only answered yea, but also gave his hand in token thereof." In another part of the same work we read from the year 1753. "The consecration of the Philadelphia Church has been minutely described by Rev. Muhlenberg, but we will only notice in regard to it, that as the corner-stones of this church have been laid with the intention that in it should be taught the Evangelical Lutheran doctrines according to the Prophets and Apostles, conformably to the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and *all the other Symbolical Books* of our Church; so also were the Church-authorities of Philadelphia, at its consecration, publicly required to enter into a verbal engagement that they would endeavor, with the help of God, to preserve it for the object above named, for their children and children's children." (Vide *Lehre und Wehre*, 1856, April, pp. 120, 121.)

It may be interesting to subjoin also a written document drawn up by the elders and deacons of the Lutheran Church, of Lancaster, Pa., in 1767, in reference to supplying a vacancy then existing in their congregation. "Highly and most reverend teachers of the United Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Philadelphia, Providence, &c., and more especially ye dear guardians of souls, Messrs. Dr. Wrangel, Henry Muhlenberg, Em. Schultz, and others, as also the honorable

members of the corporation of St. Michael's, in Philadelphia. We, the undersigned, present elders and deacons of the Church of the Holy Trinity, of the Town of Lancaster, which is united with surrounding evangelical congregations, send hearty greeting, and inform you that our large congregation is vacant and without a regular pastor. And since we, as officers and rulers of said congregation, feel bound in obedience to God and our own consciences to see to it, that our congregation do not fall into neglect, but be again provided by the grace of God, as soon as possible, with a pastor who shall treasure up in a pure conscience as a rich legacy the salutary evangelical doctrine according to the Apostles and Prophets, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and the other Symbolical Books of our mother Church, therefore," &c. &c.

At the consecration of St. Michael's Church, in Philadelphia, August 14, 1748, one of the pastors in his address says: "The corner-stone of this church has been laid with the design that in it may be taught the Evangelical Lutheran doctrines according to the Apostles and Prophets, as contained in the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and all the other Symbolical Books." (Hall. Nachr. p. 288.) Similar testimonials might be collected from a number of Lutheran congregations in this country.

That, however, such expressions were not merely used in obedience to a traditional custom, but that, on the contrary, those fathers were in earnest when they required assent to the Confession of Faith, is sufficiently evidenced by their activity. But we prefer appealing also in this to special proof. Paul D. Pryzelius was, in 1760, admitted into the Synod, on which occasion he submitted the following declaration in writing: "Therefore do I sincerely promise before God, the Searcher of Hearts, that I will teach nothing to my congregations, during my prospective labors in the ministry, except what is well founded in the canonical books of the Old and

New Testament, and to conform in all my sermons and in all my public and private instructions of the Holy Sacraments to our *Symbolical Books*," &c.

To those who desire additional information in regard to the estimation in which the specific Lutheran doctrines were held during the last century, we would recommend an attentive perusal of the Liturgy, published by the Ministerium while Dr. J. H. C. Helmuth was its President, for the use of the United Evangelical Lutheran congregations in North America, 2d edition, 1786. We will only here subjoin a few extracts from the *prayer* in the *Formula of Baptism*: "Almighty God, who hast in accordance with thy righteous judgments condemned to death the unbelieving world through the flood, and according to thy mercy saved believing Noah, . . . and thereby typified this washing of thy holy baptism; thou who hast, through the baptism of thy dear child, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, consecrated and constituted Jordan, and all waters, to a blessed flood and plentiful washing away of sins, we beseech thee, for thine infinite mercy's sake, to look graciously upon this little child, and endow its spirit with saving faith, that in this healing flood may be drowned and destroyed all that it hath inherited from Adam, and by its own acts added thereunto, and be separated from unbelievers," &c. The following is contained in the Prayer after Baptism: "Merciful and heavenly Father, we thank thee with our whole hearts, that thou hast, through water and the Holy Ghost, regenerated this little child, received it as thine own, and thereby also transplanted it into thy holy Church," pp. 24, 25. In the words used during the distribution of the elements in the Lord's Supper they even employed the terms, "this is the *true* body, the *true* blood," &c. p. 38.

Interesting is also what Dr. H. M. Muhlenberg communicates (in the Hall. Nachr. pp. 1163, 1164) about some of his

personal friends: "My old friend, Mr. Richard Peters, who for many years has been Secretary of State, Counsellor and President of the Academy, has resigned his laborious situation, and accepted a call from the congregation of the English High Church as principal minister. This gentleman is a moderate theologian, and imbued with a Catholic spirit; he thinks a great deal of our Lutheran Church, and has often said, if he could only be useful to her without detracting from the teachings of her *Libris Symbolicis* and other *Immunities*, it would afford him great pleasure."

It would be a very easy matter to adduce much more evidence of a similar kind. We will, however, in further proof of the opinion above expressed, make mention of the fact, that the United Lutheran congregations in existence prior to Father Muhlenberg's time, stood on the same basis, namely, the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church.

In the year 1708 the Lutheran minister in New York and Albany, Justus Falkner, from Zwickau, in Saxony, published a book, which was evidently occasioned by his controversies with the Calvinists. This work is noticed by the strict Lutheran, E. V. Loescher, in his "*Unschuldigen Nachrichten*," 1726, pp. 411-416, in which he plainly calls it a *compendium doctrinæ Anti-Calvinianum*. From this it evidently follows that the Lutheran doctrines had most determined defenders in those congregations. As a further proof of the same assertion we would also refer to the work published by W. Ch. Berkenmeyer, in the year 1728, in New York, occasioned by a disturbance caused by a certain J. B. von Dieren, in a Lutheran congregation in Hakkinsak, who, in addition to other irregularities, also made an attempt to introduce, in violation of the Lutheran custom, the breaking of the bread in the Holy Sacrament, in which, however, he met with opposition in the congregation itself. (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1856, Mai, pp.

153, 154.) Concerning the Lutheran congregations composed of the *Salzburgers*, settled in Georgia, and organized in 1733, we know that they accepted the aid proffered them by the King of England and the English *Societas de promovenda cognitione Christi*, only on condition "that they would be protected in the free exercise of their religion as contained in the Augsburg Confession and the other Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Church, of which they professed to be members." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1856, April, p. 121, *efr.*; *The American Lutheran Church*, by S. S. Schmucker, D.D., 1853, p. 17.)

From all this it is clearly evident that the foundation of the faith of the first Lutheran congregations and Ministerium in this country, was no other than that expressed in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church. Father Muhlenberg and his associates in the work of the ministry had not deviated from it. This cannot be denied. And it must be borne in mind, that these men were thoroughly-educated theologians, that they were held by their cotemporaries in the highest estimation as profoundly learned and highly-finished scholars, that they sustained the most honorable characters, and, above all, that they were Christians, full of sincere living piety. All this no one, to our knowledge, has ever yet ventured to call in question. And we rejoice that Dr. S. S. Schmucker has himself repeatedly and clearly testified to these facts.

We can, of course, in view of all this, not even entertain the shadow of a doubt that these men also preached the same faith, which they otherwise professed. They had given a solemn promise that they would teach the doctrines contained in the Symbolical Books. And they honestly kept their word. That they understood the sacred duties of the Gospel ministry, and performed them with conscientious fidelity, is universally acknowledged. We are particularly pleased to find that Dr. Schmucker, in a special paragraph, speaks in so beautiful a

manner of the zeal and faithfulness of those men of God. (The American Lutheran Church, pp. 99-106.) But how can Dr. Schmucker consistently eulogize the pulpit performances of those men, as long as he maintains that certain doctrines contained in our Symbolical Books, must exert a most pernicious influence on our pulpits? But we will let the Doctor speak for himself. In his "American Lutheranism Vindicated," he sometimes speaks of the pernicious tendency of some of the doctrines contained in our Symbolical Books, and affects to point out how much of Romish and Puseyistic leaven they contain, &c. &c. (pp. 122-131.) On page 135, he treats on the Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration, after which follows a special paragraph, entitled, "*Influence of this Doctrine on the Pulpit.*" The Doctor calls it (p. 141) "a most deleterious one;" and then introduces no less than six arguments to prove that this deleterious influence must necessarily be exerted in the pulpit-labors of the ministers holding it. We refer the reader to the Doctor's own words. Now there is no doubt of the fact that Father Muhlenberg believed this Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and, we think, without injury to himself or others; and, also, "*that he did not deceive himself or others by employing the name, when he did not mean the thing,*" (p. 143.) And yet these very men, Father Muhlenberg and his fellow-laborers in the Lord's vineyard, Dr. Schmucker sets up as most estimable examples also in pulpit activity. And in this the Doctor is perfectly right, though we can see no consistency in the whole of his reasoning.

Those faithful servants of the Lord, and hundreds of others besides them, are so many speaking arguments in attestation of the fact, that the Lutheran Confession of Faith does produce living fruit, wherever it is rightly received into the heart. We subscribe to all Dr. Schmucker has said in commendation of their activity and zeal displayed in awakening souls, attend-

ing to individual members, instructing the young, increasing the opportunities for edification through the means of Bible-classes and prayer-meetings, and promoting vital piety. We would be pleased to see many prayer-meetings conducted in the spirit and faith of a Muhlenberg. We wish that, when ministers meet together, they would discuss, in a truly edifying manner, important pastoral and theological questions, like these fathers were accustomed to do, in order to promote knowledge, experience, faith, love, and zeal. Such would certainly prove beneficial to all of us. But with all this we are very far from regarding those men as representatives of that system now generally known by the name of "new measures," which is the product of Methodism, and in which feeling is frequently confounded with faith, excitement with awakening produced by the Holy Spirit, and awakening with conversion. A sinner may be said to be awakened, when he is not yet converted. Losing sight of the essential difference between these two things, has been and is even now productive of incalculable mischief. But the difference between the new measure system and the principles held by those fathers will appear still more striking, when we bear in mind with what contempt the former regarded, and, in some instances, do even yet regard, the plan of imparting religious instruction to the young, by means of the catechism, and how much importance those fathers attached to this subject, and with what assiduity they devoted themselves to the religious instruction of both the old and young. They even interested themselves in having Luther's Smaller Catechism translated into the Indian language.

We would yet add a few words in reference to rites and ceremonies pertaining to public worship. That the Lutheran Church in this country was from the beginning, as it has been everywhere, *liturgical*, that, in addition to extemporaneous prayers, it also made use of set formulas, is beyond all question. Already in the year 1754, only six years after the organization

of the first Synod, a small Liturgy was composed, adapted to the wants and circumstances of the congregations. (American Luth. Ch., p. 103.) From this, however, it by no means follows, that they had, prior to this, dispensed with the use of the Liturgy; as little as the fact that the Synod of Missouri is only now occupied with the subject of publishing one, proves, that a Liturgy with responses has hitherto not been in use among their congregations.* The contrary was the case. Old Liturgies were used, as far as convenient. But that all the prayers then in use in the Church had not been embodied, by the fathers of our Church of the last century, in their printed Liturgy, will also appear by a reference to the edition published in 1786, where it is said (p. 4), that, at the close of the sermon, either the "following common prayer or the Litany may alternately be used, which, except in cases of necessity, must not be omitted." Now, it appears from this that the Litany, that sublime prayer, so full of holy earnestness, an invocation of all Christendom when prostrated before God in the dust of self-abasement, though not included in this edition of this Liturgy, was nevertheless well known and *used*; also, that liturgies were commonly employed, and that their use was not to be omitted, except in cases of "*necessity*." This, too, may be regarded as supplementary to what Dr. Schmucker says on page 103, in his "American Lutheran Church." We also find that the established custom of Liturgical Prayers and Formulas to which those fathers strictly conformed, did not in the least interfere with extemporaneous prayer. They did the one without leaving the other undone (see American Lutheran Church, p. 107). They loved evangelical liberty, but also recognized in the use of the Liturgy a salutary regulation and very ancient custom of the Christian and again of the Luth-

* Since writing the above we learn that the Synod of Missouri, &c., has just now published a Liturgy mainly compiled from the old Liturgies of our Church.

ran Church, which they respected and looked upon as being beautiful and good.* It moreover appears from the Liturgy of 1786, that responses had been introduced into the ordinary service. These consist of nothing but sentences taken from the Holy Scriptures, which are pronounced alternately by the minister in addressing, and the congregation in answering or responding, by which also the congregation gives an audible expression of its faith and prayer. This was customary already under the Old Testament dispensation, and is, therefore, in character and form purely Biblical. (See Deut. 27 : 15, 16 ; and a number of the Psalms.) It would not be worth our while to say even a single word on this point, if there were not also among ourselves men who are ever ready to denounce whatever does not chime in with the traditions and views they have derived from the Puritans as Romish, no matter how Biblical or Christian it may be. That the Liturgies of that time were small is partly explained by what has already been said, and partly by the circumstance that the publication of books in general is attended with considerable expense, and that the pecuniary facilities were, at that time, by no means abundant. We, however, subscribe to the principle that Liturgies should not be voluminous.

In these things, then, in their retention of many venerable Lutheran Church customs, in the observance of some of the most important Church festivals, in wearing the ecclesiastical vestments during public service, in using a Liturgy with responses, and in believing, preaching, and teaching the Old

* It is to be regretted that Liturgies have not, as yet, had a fair trial, especially among the English portion of our Church. It is no easy matter to frame a formula of prayer of a really liturgical character. Real Church language is something widely different from the expression of individual piety, or even from the best style of secular classics. It is painful to see how void of Scriptural language many of the formulas in use in our English Liturgies really are.

Lutheran faith, they, of course, differed in many points from many of our American Lutheran ministers. But in this, that they lived and labored and suffered to the glory of God, whose servants they were, we are all agreed. Yet with all this they were, by no means, sticklers for external rites and ceremonies, but maintained in this the principle of evangelical liberty according to the Symbolical Books of our Church, wisely guarding, on the one hand, against an undue license, and, on the other, avoiding a slavish submission to mere forms. They ever retained a consciousness of their Lutheran peculiarity; and Count Zinzendorf, not less than Bishop White, had demonstrative evidence of the fact, that Muhlenberg and his brethren in the Lord were perfectly in earnest and sincere Lutherans both in theory and practice.

We conclude this chapter by simply mentioning a subject to which the fathers of that time paid very strict attention in the performance of the duties of their office, but the neglect of which, at a later period, in many congregations, has been productive of incalculable mischief, namely, church discipline. Wherever the Presbyterian form of Church government is introduced, Church discipline is absolutely necessary, that the multitude of the ungodly may not invade the congregation, lay waste the sanctuary of the Lord, and after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. It appears from the charters of many congregations of that period, that the fathers, at that time, used the precaution of securing their congregations, as far as legal provision enabled them, against the influence of the ungodly and infidels. Yet there are evidences to prove that they were even more strict in practice, and we are able to refer, if necessary, to instances where Dr. H. M. Muhlenberg refused the communion to some, others were excommunicated, and penitents, in presence of the whole congregation made public confession of their sins. And it is particularly gratifying to find, that congregations at that time

supported their ministers in this, and thus aided them in their endeavors to maintain Christian discipline and order.

All these features together, which we mention as being characteristic of the spirit and life of the primitive Lutheran Church in this country, afford sufficient evidence that its history had, in this new field of labor, a most favorable and blessed beginning, that standing as it did on the foundation of the old Confession, its growth was vigorous and cheering, and that in view of its inherent strength and the agreement of its parts, it could look forward to a glorious future. But how very different according to its internal character, yea, according to its entire condition, does the Lutheran Church in this country now stand before us! It has enlarged its borders and enlarges them daily. But it is no longer a unit, but a battle-field for different parties. Some have in many respects abandoned the faith once so dear to their fathers, and publicly decried and opposed this and that as erroneous. The doctrines of their own Church, as well as many of its ancient and time-honored customs, have become worthless in their estimation, and they rather adopt, what the respect they entertain for the Church-customs of other denominations allows them to regard as suitable and right. Others, on the contrary, are desirous of returning to the old doctrines and usages, and are not even satisfied with the judicious moderation and tolerant spirit of such a man as Father Muhlenberg. Others, again, take no active interest in these questions, but desire, for the sake of outward tranquillity, as a matter of expediency, a church-peace, which is not to be expected, where there is no unity in the spirit, and which, if it be built on the basis of indifference in regard to weighty questions, would scarcely be deserving of true praise. But tranquillity in this cannot be feigned, and a peace cannot be forced. The fewer carnal weapons are employed in this warfare, the less will the labor be accounted as lost that has been spent in conducting it to a successful issue—a true harmony.

PART FIFTH.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WE have endeavored to present to our readers a picture of the past and present of the Lutheran Church, in as clear a light as possible. Guided by the testimony of history, we have had occasion to go back to those severe conflicts, where Luther, the herald of a new epoch in the history of the world and the Church, stood up boldly in opposition to the Pope, and unfurled the banner of the Word of God. We have seen how, under the influence of his mighty genius, a Church was formed that bears his name, and stands among the trees in the garden of God unmistakable in the peculiarity of its character, vigorously growing, alongside of others, out of the rotten trunk of the Romish Church. We have seen that this Lutheran Church reads the Holy Scriptures with her own eyes, and has never been afraid to proclaim openly before the whole world what she has therein found as the irrefragable testimony of the Holy Spirit to the salvation of souls. May others find and believe according to the measure of grace God has given them. The Lutheran Church does not say that in her only men can be saved, but the knowledge of the Divine mysteries, which she possesses, she does not relinquish, but still says, "Except I am refuted by the clear testimony of the Holy Scriptures; I neither can nor will recant. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen!"

The Lutheran Church has also passed in review before us, as it was, during the last century, transplanted from the Old World to this western land. It was just about the time when it had passed a fearful period in its history. Amid the zeal displayed for the purity of the faith, the importance of spiritual life was very often not sufficiently considered, and there were indeed

many who had a zeal not according to knowledge. But a new life had again been awakened through the powerful instrumentalities of God. The point of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, had been turned not only against error in doctrine, but especially against the sins and impurities of the heart and life. Confessional orthodoxy was not regarded as the fruit of mere Bible knowledge, but as that knowledge which exhibits its fruit in living piety and a truly Christian walk and conversation. Just about this time, the time when Christian life was undergoing a most salutary regeneration, it pleased God, in his ever wise Providence, to bless the Lutheran Church in North America with the service of faithful witnesses and energetic laborers. Their Confession was, as we have seen, the Lutheran. By this Confession those servants of God lived and died. Their memory amongst us is blessed, and ever will be. Though they be dead, they yet speak.

But our aim has more especially been to give a picture of the Lutheran Church as it appears at present in the United States. We have seen how much violent opposition exists among those who are nominally members of one and the same Church, and who, notwithstanding their principles diverge considerably, love their Lutheran Church, and are zealously laboring for the promotion of its interests.

And surely there cannot be one member among those who love it who does not, in view of all these circumstances, ask himself the question, What will be its future destiny? Will she continue to remain in this divided condition? Will not, perhaps, even what yet remains to unite its members in their labors be removed, and the whole come to an open and disastrous rupture? Will not these divisions finally end in a total dissolution? Or, may we hope that this diversity of opinion will eventually lead to a satisfactory result—to a closer unity in the Church? May not this very controversy, if conducted in a dignified manner, without perverse and unreason-

able obstinacy and unchristian bitterness, and by every one forming his judgment in accordance with facts, and not from preconceived opinions, and with a mind open to conviction, be instrumental in disseminating more correct information and enlarged views, and thus be conducive to the general good?

Verily, these are no idle questions; for they remind every one of the influence he either does or may be able to exert in the Church. They remind him of his personal responsibility, and of his sacred duty of putting his hands to the work, and with earnestness, self-denying fidelity, and judicious moderation, aid in building up the walls of Zion.

If, in the following, we give expression to a few thoughts which, though most intimately connected with the contents of this book, point yet more to the future than the past, we do not entertain the remotest idea that we are able to penetrate the future, or understand the mysterious designs of the Divine government of the world and the Church. We only desire to direct the serious attention of our readers to a few points, which are of importance in regard to our views concerning the Church, and our conduct as its members.

CHAPTER I.

THE MISSION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

It is an axiom, the truth of which no Christian will even for a moment doubt, that whatever takes place in this world, great or small, is subject to the superintendence of an omnipotent, allwise, loving, and holy Governor, whose designs all things are, in the end, made to subserve; *for wonderful are the thoughts of God, which are to usward.* (Ps. 42 : 5.) From this it follows that especially the history of the Church is subject to his holy and divine guidance. It is true, in one

sense, we see in it a human work, for revealed truth has been committed to man's keeping; he is a steward, and as such teaches, preaches, and labors, with the view of promoting the interests of the kingdom of God. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that God watches over all his actions, and either permits or prevents them, as in his infinite wisdom it may seem good. Man's nature being corrupt, sin and error are possible wherever he is active. But if God permits them, at any time, to be committed, it is done that he may finally reveal to men his wisdom and holiness. The knowledge of this reconciles us to much that transpires in the history of the kingdom of God on earth. The fact that God's hand is over all, and that he accomplishes his purposes and designs in spite of all apparent hindrances, is to us full of consolation.

But we also meet, both in the Church and the world, with a great variety of gifts and talents, which, nevertheless, are to be employed in the service of one and the same Lord. These various faculties when put in motion, will, notwithstanding their agreement in those principles which must necessarily give direction to this motion, produce different results, as may be perceived in all the different departments in which the mind of man has displayed its activity. The faculties of individuals differ in degree and quality, notwithstanding the identity of the fundamental laws that govern the human mind. This same diversity in gifts we also find to exist between different nations. We speak of their peculiar genius, and recognize their peculiarities in their literature, arts, laws, and customs, some being particularly distinguished in one, some in another of these departments.

To this diversity, ordained of God, religious ideas and life are also subject. Such is the case, too, with regard to Christianity. The revealed truth of God is but one, the Gospel is but one, the law in regard to our salvation is but one. But in this oneness we must not overlook the existence of a plurality

of doctrines, ordinances, and appointments, which are, however, only so many rays emitted from the same sun. But now it is intended to save a great variety of men through this one Gospel. Thereby those inherent diversities in their natural talents are made to appear. For the Holy Spirit does not remove, but only sanctify them. The same sun sends forth his rays in all directions, but they emit different degrees of light, whilst they produce one and the same heat. Matthew and John loved the Saviour with equal affection, and yet how different is, notwithstanding this internal agreement, the manner in which they record their testimony of his life, labors, and words! The individuality of each is apparent, but employed in the service of one and the same Lord and Master, and under the guidance of one and the same Spirit. The same may be noticed in reference to Paul and James. One lays peculiar stress on faith in the free grace of God, whilst the other insists more particularly on the fruits which such a faith must produce. All this involves, however, no contradiction; and this very variety, which we find in the Holy Scriptures, only increases its interest and makes it the more instructive.

This idea we will now apply, with but one exception, to the history of the Church at large. This exception consists in the fact, that the Apostles, with all their diversity of gifts, were in their characters as sacred writers and teachers free from error. With their successors this was not the case. And we are now obliged to try the truth of any doctrine, that may be promulgated, by the Word which has been handed down to us from them. Yet we nevertheless also firmly believe, that wherever souls manifest a sincere desire to establish themselves on the Word of God, there, too, will its divine truth manifest its effects, though error may, at the same time, intermingle with their views concerning its teachings. It is impossible to regard these diversities in views, which are based on one and the same Divine Word, as being the result of blindness or

perhaps malice. They are much rather the effect of different capacities, yea, even the effect of different national spirits. This diversity equally existed, during the 16th century, when Protestantism appeared in opposition to the Romish Church. Who does not perceive a mighty difference between a Luther and a Calvin? Were they not, each one, the representative of a different national genius? Both searched after the Divine truth, both strove to promote the honor and glory of God. But both read, each with his own eyes, in the Holy Scriptures, and found, in some points, something different from the other. And notwithstanding the intimate relation which Lutheran and Reformed Churches sustain to one another, they nevertheless essentially differ.

But are those disputes now settled? Is there any one of sufficient authority to be able to quiet the consciences of all as to whether Luther was in the right in this, and Calvin in the wrong in that, or *vice versa*? O, no! On the contrary, we feel constrained to say, that the time of its adjustment appears still very distant. Yet of this we are certain, that the various spiritual gifts, which we find at work in the different sections of the Protestant Church, are also under Divine guidance. They are each, in their way, productive of good, and the one may become instrumental in promoting the usefulness of the other.

Above all, we will not lose sight of the fact, that there is a general basis for all Protestant denominations, who hold to the Apostles' Creed, who maintain these two principles, namely, the Word of God is the only source of religious knowledge, and, we are saved through the free grace of God in Christ. Wherever these are taught and believed, there may men obtain salvation. But now, let no one say, Why, then, not leave all else out of view, and preach only this? We answer, because here are at issue those manifold religious truths, all of which flow from that same fountain. Here are concerned the

ways and means to be employed in making man the partaker of this 'free grace of God in Christ.' And this is the point where difficult exegetical, dogmatical, and other questions rise up, especially so, because Protestantism insists, and that justly, upon a most minute and absolutely reliable investigation of the Holy Scriptures.

We now direct our attention more particularly to this diversity among the different parts of the Protestant Church. This is found to exist in doctrine, worship, and Church government. To remove this diversity in the entire Protestant Church is, of course, altogether out of the question. What God may, in future, constrain men, through the influence of his Holy Spirit, to do, we know not. But thus much we do know, that, if these differences are the result of that influence which the operative natural capacities of individuals and nations exert on religious ideas and life, it must also follow, that one individuality and nationality possesses a certain degree of superiority over the other, and that the latter will often appear to a corresponding disadvantage. God has endowed the Germanic nations with mental gifts, which, in due course of history, have become known to the world. Equally peculiar capacities are possessed by Romano-Germanic nations. These capacities are designed to be employed for the good of the Church and civilization generally. *They have a mission.* We trace their influence in Confessions, in forms pertaining to public worship, and in Church government. If they throw aside their peculiarities, they cease to be a peculiar sect, and lose their peculiar qualities with their corresponding usefulness. We, of course, do not wish to be so understood, as if including every sect assuming the name Protestant. But let us look at Calvinism and Lutheranism as prominent examples. Calvinism, with its rigid discipline, and zeal for the law, exhibits one of the most important features of the Word of God, and the character of

the Church. Its capacities are peculiarly fitted for this. The peculiarity of the Lutheran doctrine consists in its intimate acquaintance with the entire economy of the Old and New Testament, and that living relation into which divinity and humanity entered, in consequence of Christ, the Son of God, appearing on the earth. It gives special prominence to the difference between the law and the Gospel, and urges Evangelical liberty. Now, is the former to give up its peculiarly strong points, because some of its adherents run into the extreme of legalism? Or shall the Lutheran Church part with her peculiarities in doctrine and spirit, because some of her members are not able to appreciate their truth and value, or perhaps even abuse them? By no means. But they are to learn of one another. And to do this, it is not necessary that either of them should give up its characteristic peculiarities. Whatever good the one may find in the other, let her imitate it. In this way, the example of the Calvinistic or Presbyterian form of Church government has, in North America, already been followed by the Lutheran Church, and we regard this as an evidence that it will, in future, sustain a sound and vigorous growth.

We can, therefore, see no reason why the Lutheran Church should relinquish its peculiar doctrines, and some other things that have been customary to be observed, in its public worship, since its existence. We have had occasion to call attention to a few points, in which the evangelical purity and genuine Christian profundity of the Lutheran doctrine may be recognized. Its distinction from other Confessions constitutes its superiority. We have the testimony of the greatest and most learned theologians, the most reliable and accurate grammarians and philologists, and of men of the sincerest and most unaffected piety, from the time of its origin to the present, in favor of these selfsame Lutheran doctrines. These doctrines are simply based upon the Word of God. They do not construe it,

nor endeavor to adapt supernatural revelation to the comprehension of our natural reason, they add nothing, take nothing away, but *simply believe* it. And have they not a right to do this?

And we do not merely say our Church has a right, but that it is her sacred duty. And for the same reason she is under a most solemn obligation to preserve that knowledge of the Scriptures which God bestowed upon her, as a rich and priceless treasure for her future life and history, while yet an infant in her cradle-bed. And the time may come when she will send out as rich a flood of light as she did three centuries ago, when her doctrines will exert an influence upon the views now prevalent among some other denominations. There is in the Lutheran Confession a depth and profundity of comprehension of the mysteries of the New Testament, that ought to be the last thing a Lutheran should be willing to resign, go whithersoever he may. If the German mind can lay a just claim to superiority in any one thing, it is that penetrating intuition with which it pierces sublime and heavenly things. In this it exhibits its acuteness. To this must be added that profoundness and independence in regard to scientific investigations so peculiar to German scholars. Scientific liberty is nowhere more extensively enjoyed than in Germany; and though its abuse has, as is everywhere the case, been productive of mischief, its benefits have also been abundant.* And

* Those who may feel disposed to doubt that German theology is exerting an influence in this country, need only be referred to the large number of modern German theological works to be met with in the libraries of the Seminaries of all denominations, as well as in those of a goodly number of ministers, who otherwise possess but little acquaintance with German affairs, and manifest as little sympathy for them. They know, however, right well, how to benefit by German theological ideas and learning. All this is owing to the circumstance of German theologians having returned to the true faith. And what we here say in regard to this country is equally applicable to Great Britain. The translation of German theological works into the English

this Germanic peculiarity the Lutheran Church ought never to disown. By means of it she may hereafter become a blessing to Christendom, in many parts of which superficiality in religious affairs is evidently prevailing more and more. There are so many who weigh revealed truth only in the scale of common sense, who judge of the effects of the Gospel by the uncertain and ever-varying standard of personal feeling or outward appearances, and who even attempt either to substitute their fancied humanitarianism for doctrines altogether beyond the comprehension of reason, or subject them to their earthy-minded utilitarianism.

We therefore entertain the hope that the Lutheran Church will have to perform a mission in the Church at large. To us, indeed, it appears not a mere matter of accident that, in the providence of God, so much of the German blood intermingles, in this country, with the Anglo-Saxon and Irish, and that the Lutheran Church is here being established on a broad and liberal basis between the Roman Catholic and Calvinistic Churches. Call us who may a visionary enthusiast. We feel warranted, after calm and mature reflection, and not without a glance at the history of the past and the confusions of the present, in declaring it as our firm and settled conviction, that Divine Providence has an ultimate design in the preservation and increase of the Lutheran Church.

On this account we regard it as very hazardous to give up, in obedience to the influence of a foreign spirit, in addition to our doctrines, many other peculiarities of the Lutheran Church, as is, alas, in too many places the case. True, it matters but little about forms, as such. But if we give them up merely in accommodation to others, the consequence will be, that our

language is almost carried on by wholesale; whilst, on the contrary, English theology exerts scarcely any influence on German theology. In the practical department, however, the case is different.

own will gradually decline in our estimation, and we will lose self-respect.

We therefore regard fidelity to the doctrines and principal usages of the Lutheran Church a duty. For we believe, that in so doing she will be the better fitted to accomplish her mission in the history of the future. But let no one so understand us, as if we intended to say, that we ought, on that account, assume a forbidding and intolerant attitude towards those entertaining different views. In this way we would only cut off, for ourselves, every opportunity of exerting an influence upon them. We, on the contrary, do most sincerely desire, that the principle of toleration may prevail more and more among dissenting brethren in the Lutheran Church itself. It must not, at once, be taken for granted that an opponent is governed by evil designs. We must consider what a powerful influence is everywhere exerted on man, by education, associations, &c. Nor must it be forgotten that, when a view has become popular among the people, it is by no means an easy task to induce them to give it up. Blind zeal, a disposition to accuse others of heresy, and of acting from impure motives, does not impress them favorably with ourselves, or incline them to listen to our views and arguments, but sours and repulses them. Only declare the truth calmly and in love, and with the earnestness of Christ bear your testimony for it; as for the rest, it will make way for itself.

But suppose the Lutheran Church should give up her peculiar doctrines; suppose she should adopt the Zwinglean dogma concerning the Eucharist, or the doctrines of the Methodists, or the formless system of the Puritans,—what would become of this Lutheran Church? Perhaps she would say, the Augsburg Confession is indeed my Symbolical Book, but I blush to be obliged to confess, that it contains a number of very deplorable errors, which I cannot, on that account, believe! Truly, such a Symbolical Book would be an oddity indeed;

and that Church which must everywhere confess that it does not believe in its own Confession, must be in a very sad and lamentable condition. The consequences that would result from such a state of things are not difficult to foresee. A Symbolical Book can only be regarded as such as long as it professes the faith of a Church, but ceases to be a Symbolical Book as soon as it contains doctrines which the Church declares errors. This has been so regarded as long as the Church of Christ has existed upon the earth. But how can the Lutheran Church ever expect to command the respect of others, as long as she everywhere publicly denounces her own Symbolical Books as erroneous? Such a course of conduct cannot but weaken the confidence of her own members, and lessen that reverence and love which they should cherish towards her, as their mother Church. And if one or more individuals may at any time publicly declare this or that part of the Confession of the Church erroneous, if neological views may exercise within her so much power over the teachings of the Lutheran Reformers, where will matters end?

Just about the time when, in Germany, the authority of the Symbolical Books was being undermined, Rationalism raised its head, and the hostile attacks which were at first directed against the doctrines of the Church were afterwards also aimed against the Word of God itself. If our Lutheran Church ceases to regard her teachings as the teachings of the Divine Word, if our Lutheran Reformers were in error in those very points for which they could not hold out the hand of fellowship even to Protestant brethren, then indeed may she be ashamed of all in which she was, from the beginning, and has been hitherto, original; then indeed had she better be dissolved and become blended with other evangelical denominations, in whose Confession there is truth unmixed with error; then, too, has she no other mission to fulfil.

But we are far from giving place to this most melancholy

thought. We, on the contrary, believe that there are many indications that the Lutheran Church, so far from being in danger of entirely disappearing, is only gaining new strength. The field lying open before her ministers is boundless. Let us only first ourselves drink in again the truths of our Confession, and then in the name of the Lord commence to build the Lutheran Church, not upon an unlutheran, but a Lutheran foundation, and she will fulfil her future mission!

CHAPTER II.

PIA DESIDERIA.

WE think it scarcely possible that any of our readers can have followed us in our recital of the condition of that Church of which they profess to be members, without having become deeply impressed, in view of the differences and schisms existing amongst us, that we ought, above all things, to be more closely and actively *united*. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for his people, that they might be one, even as He and the Father are one. (John 17.) Every true Christian regards the condition of the Church universal with feelings of sadness, and ardently prays for the accomplishment of the promise, which declares, that there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. (John 10 : 16.) But yet it is his special desire that peace and unity may prevail in that part of God's kingdom with which he stands more immediately connected. So also will every true Lutheran desire and pray, that the walls of partition, in our mother Church may speedily be thrown down, and the time be hastened when brother shall cease to oppose brother, and all live together in peace, as members of one body, uniting their efforts in promoting the interests of our beloved Zion. And we sincerely trust, that every member will be willing to labor with self-denying devotion for the consummation of such a union,

and cease to place confidence in those who seek to cause internal divisions, and thereby weaken the energy and neutralize the influence of the Church.

That her influence on the world and on the kingdom of God is necessarily dependent on such a union needs no proof. The material out of which she is to be built up is exceedingly abundant. She has already gained a footing in the east and west, and north and south of this immense country. The protracted and uninterrupted flow of the tide of emigration from Germany and Scandinavia hitherward, promises to this Church an extraordinary increase. And the obstacles which continually rise up before her, in consequence of the irreligious condition, especially of many of the German emigrants, should only stimulate *that* Church, which has the first and best claim to them, to more vigorous action in their behalf, that they may be influenced for good; then might we confidently look to the succeeding generation for better things, and the Lutheran Church might rejoice in the accession of thousands of members. It must, moreover, not be forgotten that the majority of native and emigrant members of the Lutheran Church belong to the best, most solid and substantial part of the entire population of this country. They are not a fluctuating, but a fixedly-settled class of people, including, in our towns and cities, many mechanics and merchants, and throughout the country many farmers, who reside on their well-cultivated and productive plantations. The Church of Christ does not depend upon external means, yet it can as little exist without them as an individual.

Now here we have a large number of the most solid citizens of our country, who, with the means with which God has so richly endowed them, form the basis for the external support and promotion of the Lutheran Church. No Church has, in this respect, better prospects than she; and if the liberality of her members was only more proportionate to their means, and

the virtue of giving more common among them than it really is, what enterprises might she not undertake, what important objects accomplish? Our Colleges might all be endowed, our Seminaries might educate a considerable number of young men for the Gospel ministry, and our Foreign and Domestic Missionary stations might be increased. We might also make ample provision,—and who is more in duty bound to do this than the Lutheran Church?—that the Gospel might be preached in German and English among our people everywhere, as circumstances would require. Our Church contains a large number of talented and scientifically educated men, who are familiar with the German and English, and can duly estimate the advantages of literature, particularly as they flow from the theological and ecclesiastical science of both languages, which they might unite and translate, the one into the other, and thus render important service to the department of science in this country, and, at the same time, exert a most important influence on the entire Protestant Church in North America. Some few, we are happy to see, have already made an effort in this direction.

In this way the Lutheran Church would be fulfilling her mission, of which we have spoken above. If this widely-extended, rapidly-increasing Church was united as she should be, if we would hold together as our fathers did, in those days when views which prevailed in Churches of English origin had not yet deprived the Lutheran Church, in this country, of the precious treasure of her Faith and Confession, if there had always existed, and was now existing, among her ministers agreement in doctrine, a certain uniformity in usages and forms, unshaken firmness upon the old and well-secured foundation, the Lutheran Church with her peculiarities would stand before us as firm as, for instance, the Episcopal, or the Baptist, or any other. We would then know where to find her; but as it is, her members are only too frequently forced

to confess that they do not know in what she differs from others. Yet, notwithstanding, there are thousands who sincerely love their Church. But, owing to those heterogeneous views which have obtruded themselves upon her and exerted a marked influence even on some of our Professors and Doctors, not only much that is altogether unlutheran has been forced upon the Church, but some things peculiarly Lutheran have been decried by some of her own members, with inconceivable recklessness.

When will the time come, when the man shall excite nothing but pity who proclaims to the Church and the world that the principal Confession of the Lutherans, the Augsburg Confession, teaches *five* grave errors? Where must such a course of conduct lead to? Does not the experience of these latter times teach us that it causes our people to become mistrustful of their own Church, and makes them feel insecure in its communion? The first Professor of the first Seminary of our Church publishes to the world, that her doctrines must exert a very deleterious influence upon her pulpit; that soul-destroying errors were taught by Luther and our fathers in the Old and New World. Men, some of whom would not be able to pass an examination on their special knowledge of the doctrines and Symbolical Books of our Church, or who have never been accustomed to examine and think for themselves, but received, without first subjecting to the test of accurate criticism, whatever professors and instructors, who are themselves under the influence of such views, may have repeated to them, willingly fall in with these prejudices. Synods proclaim it to the world that they do not believe those errors, whether contained in the Augsburg Confession or not; just as if any one, in our day, thought they did. Adherence to the old doctrines, as delivered to the fathers, is spoken of in a way as if it was supposed to be destructive to vital piety, whilst, at the same time, it is well known that in olden times, when the Church yet

adhered to them, more genuine virtue, piety, justice, honesty, faith, and heavenly-mindedness, and less affectation of piety, hypocrisy, mammon-worship, vanity, contention, and strife existed, than is the case in our day, with all its self-praise and boasted modern *measures* for the promotion of piety. Men, at that time, lived more with a constant view to heavenly things. They lived with God, and in his fear. The young, being constantly under the influence of religion, grew up in obedience and faith. But now we have, in spite of all our advantages, only a sort of religion, which has a mere convulsive existence. A refined unbelief, which endeavors to accommodate Divine revelation to the comprehension of human reason, pervades everything. Religion has become, with thousands, only a Sunday-ornament. The world, with them, is getting larger; heaven and eternity smaller. Religion is, so to speak, no longer a matter of course, "the one thing needful," a something without which a man cannot live, his element, the life of his life, the guiding star of his actions, the light of his heart, the comforter in his sorrows. No; to interest men in religion nowadays requires the aid of special excitement and uncommon attraction. This is the case with thousands, particularly among the fashionable. And this is so because, instead of sincerely believing in those supernatural agencies, of which the Word of God testifies, Divine revelation is accommodated to man's natural understanding. Hence this over-estimating of private judgment, casual emotions, subjective taste, desires, love, hatred, believing and disbelieving; as if Divine truth was revealed in this! And now, instead of returning to the old, instead of endeavoring to become better acquainted with its spirit, instead of subjecting our ancient Confession, which originated at a time, when the world was favored with a special outpouring of the Spirit and renewed light, many, even in the Lutheran Church, bow before the spirit of the age which now governs the religious world, and

convert their own Church into an undefined and ever-changing form, thus weakening its internal strength, stinting its growth, preventing its several parts from combining into a solid internal union, and withdrawing their influence from the Church generally. Are these not all suicidal measures?

The reader must, however, bear in mind, that this sort of conduct, the undermining of the Church, by no means finds favor with a very large portion of the most intelligent English Lutheran ministers and laymen. They even raise their voices against it. But what is the consequence of such a condition of things? Of course, no other than disunion, want of mutual confidence, want of sincere fraternal feeling and cheerful co-operation. It creates factions, which only gather around their own men. Names, which to one party are odious, are pronounced by the other with admiration. The public press is employed as a medium to give vent to bitter feelings in regard to men and parties. Efforts are made, both publicly and in secret, to influence the members of Synods in favor of this or that party, with the view of promoting its interests and increasing its authority. The one endeavors to deprive the other of power and influence. Alas, alas, what a sad and saddening picture of a Church! Let this suffice to convince us that we stand in need of nothing more than *internal unity*.

However, in this all agree. The question only is, in what way is this union to be brought about?

We are very far from believing ourselves able, though ever so willing, of proposing a remedy that might heal these internal divisions. The fact is, in a case of this kind, neither force nor advice will prove availing. What we can do, and what we ought to do, is to pray and labor, as far as it is in our power to do so, and as far as we know how, for the welfare of Zion, regardless alike of the favor and fear of man. It is the duty of every one to make the existing condition of things a subject for serious reflection, and acknowledge, without prejudice, whatever he may find to be either good or bad.

One of the greatest disadvantages under which the Lutheran Church has long since labored is that *looseness*, in consequence of which we have principally lost our former character as a Church, and to which it is owing, that other ecclesiastical bodies or even single individuals have found it so easy to produce an internal transformation of our Church, and adapt it to others.

This *looseness* has thrown the door wide open to the arbitrary conduct of individuals. Look, for instance, at the Episcopal Church. There, the case is altogether different. And whilst there, perhaps, too much weight is attached to ritual law, our own Church does certainly not pay sufficient regard to established Church usages. Our Synods, although composed of *clerical and lay* delegates, are only *advisory bodies*. Individual ministers do not appear to regard themselves in duty bound to obey the resolutions of Synod, except they please to do so. And hence our ancient Church usages, in connection with public worship, have not been discontinued in consequence of Synodical action to that effect, but because every minister regarded himself, by virtue of this *looseness*, at liberty to act, in reference to these things, as he listed. If he was favorable to the Old, he retained it; if not, it was rejected, and something new adopted in its place. Thus our Church, with her great variety of constitutions and usages, strongly resembles the many-colored coat of Joseph. But such a state of things is, by no means, calculated to exert a beneficial influence on the members of our Church throughout the country. They feel, in consequence of these differences, separated amongst themselves, and the fewer of the ancient customs they meet with in their own Church, the less they are aware that only such or such was the Lutheran form, and the more easy will they find it, on opportunity, to unite with other denominations. In consequence of this *looseness*, the regulations which originally existed in the Lutheran Church, and also during the last cen-

ture, in this country, have given way to great disorder, want of harmony and uniformity.

This *looseness* has also been the cause of the introduction of strange doctrines into our Church, as well as of that ignorance which with many prevails in regard to our own. Could a man, and that man a Professor of one of our theological Seminaries, have stood up in our Church during the last century, and charged the Augsburg Confession with teaching errors? But what a lamentable effect has it had, that individual views have been allowed to exert so great an influence? Does this circumstance not fully account for the uncertain character of our churchly piety, which in many places may, with much more propriety, be called Methodistical than Lutheran? And does it not also account for that disunion and strife which now prevail in our Church? Liberty is a good thing. But liberty can only exist by means of law and submission to law. This holds equally good in ecclesiastical affairs. "If a house be divided against itself that house cannot stand." If an instructor in a theological Seminary enjoys the liberty of teaching doctrines other than the doctrines of the Church, whose servant, not lord, he is, if a convention of ministers and lay delegates may declare, by resolution, this or that point in our Confession heterodox, if in this way, that which should be most stable, namely, our doctrines, become the most variable and uncertain, where, we ask every reflecting reader, will we find a limit to this changeableness? One may come to-day, and say, this is indispensably necessary to be believed—another may come to-morrow with a different platform, which he extends or contracts at pleasure. We may here also be permitted to remark, that Professors in theological seminaries of a Church are above all others in duty bound to be conservative; not to teach neological views in opposition to the original faith of the Church, but rather to defend it, so that instructors may be raised up for the Church, who shall be well grounded in her faith, and faithfully con-

tinue to build on the old foundation. Should a man's convictions not permit him to do this, the Church will suffer far less by his leaving, than by his continuing in her connection, to promulgate strange doctrines and foster a foreign spirit, which, in the end, can only be productive of discord and strife.

It is a fact established by the united testimony of ecclesiastical history, that those doctrines, which a religious denomination has once adopted as its Confession of Faith, cannot easily be so altered, that the same denomination may afterwards be regarded as teaching a faith different from that upon which it was originally established. Such was the case in Germany. Rationalism, about fifty years ago, appeared to have gained a complete victory in the Lutheran Church in Germany. But behold what a remarkable reaction has taken place in favor of the Old Lutheran doctrines! Nay, even in America, a very intelligent reaction has already commenced, in opposition to that transformation which has been in progress for the last thirty years—a reaction, the more slowly and firmly it proceeds, the more certain will be its success. And among those who, in this new world, regard the faith of the fathers, who have lived since the days of Luther, the true faith, are found not only foreigners, but also Americans, men well versed in theological science, and gifted with no ordinary talents. They have devoted themselves, with renewed pleasure, to the study of our Lutheran doctrines, with a view to gain a deeper insight into their profound biblical and strictly evangelical contents.

Another defect, deserving of special mention, and more or less connected with that *looseness* of which we have just been treating, is a *great deficiency in a thorough acquaintance with the doctrines and peculiar character of our Church*. This deficiency may, to a great extent, explain the misunderstandings now existing among our members.

We presume no one will take offence at us, if we express the wish, that our ministers, especially, would make themselves better acquainted with the Confession of our Church, by carefully examining the original sources. A more frank and honorable course it is impossible for us to pursue, than that of inviting all to subject our Confession to a most rigid and searching examination by the infallible Word of God. Nay, we feel fully persuaded, that an unprejudiced study of our Symbolical Books would prove the simplest, as well as the most effectual expedient for reconciling those differences which, partly, exist in regard to them. We would like to be informed how many of those, who now speak of them either sneeringly or by way of condemnation, have actually thoroughly studied them. We have reason to believe that some, who are about taking their stand on the "Platform," must confess, to the honor of truth, that they have never thoroughly studied either the Augsburg Confession, or any of the other Symbolical Books. But now we ask, that these records of the faith of our fathers be rigidly examined, and that, too, before they are either commended or censured. For we do not wish them even to be commended, save by those really acquainted with them. We fear that there are also those, in our day, who, under the peculiar influence of their theological education, and in consequence of a certain position, have too easily arrived at the conclusion that there is something great and glorious in the Church's orthodoxy. But far from being able to comprehend the spirit of the fathers, they practise the most spiritless dead-letter orthodoxy, indulge in the use of high-sounding words, exhibit a fondness for making a show in their pulpits, by the frequent introduction of the name of Luther, or even citations from the Symbolical Books, which mimicry they regard as being sound Lutheranism. Such men become most generally haughty and litigious, hierarchical in the administration of their pastoral office, refuse to acknowledge any good in those with

whom they differ, and are utterly unwilling to learn anything from them. We regret it, if such men make the orthodoxy of our fathers their catchword. We cannot discover any Christian, and consequently no Lutheran virtue, in that susceptibility which, under the pretext of zeal for Divine truth, is ready to disturb the general peace, in the event of any and every difference, and which, in looking at the things in which we differ, is blind to all in which we still agree.

But nothing would be more painful to ourselves and every other true friend of the Lutheran Church, if orthodoxy should suddenly become with us a thing of fashion, like New Measures, or windows of stained glass, in American churches, have become a matter of fashion. No, we do not want the assent of any to our Old Lutheran Confession, save of those who really know to what doctrines and principles they are assenting. Otherwise our return to the ancient faith would only be an illusion, and the second error be worse than the first. We will therefore repeat it, that we want men who shall esteem it their duty to search out and examine the views under the influence of which Luther and his coadjutors framed the doctrines of our Church. The more intimately any one will make himself acquainted with the spirit of those men, the less will he be of opinion, that he need only subscribe to the letter of their orthodoxy, or, on the other hand, that he is their superior in matters pertaining to theology. The misapprehensions under which both are laboring will vanish, as soon as they will know with accuracy, how, during that time of grave theological discussion, our Lutheran Confession was formed, in its originality, under the hands of those holy men of God.

It seems to be a generally acknowledged fact, that our Church, in this country, is in a *state of transition*. Her external condition is one of rapid growth. Her strength, which, according to the common course of things, lay hitherto more in the eastern part of the United States, will, in future, be

developed, especially, in the West and Northwest. The German element in her, is, in consequence of emigration, and particularly on account of the energetic zeal of the Old Lutheran Brethren, again on the increase. These, although maintaining separate positions, are nevertheless most actively devoted to the interests of the Lutheran Church. There is no doubt that they are continually collecting more and more material, and that a considerable amount of the best theological talent from Germany will unite with them. The success they have met with for the last ten years is most encouraging, and promises much for the future. It cannot be otherwise than that they will, in time to come, cause their influence to be felt over a large part of the territory of our Church in this country. As a means of self-preservation they will not confine themselves to the German, but make special provision for an English Lutheran literature, with a view to promote the interests of our faith.

If we take a general survey of the present condition of our Church, we cannot but be peculiarly impressed. Not many years ago, when Methodistical excitements had thrown the whole country into a religious fever, it might have been regarded as a settled fact, that the views and principles of the New Lutheran Church, *i. e.*, of a confessionally altered Lutheranism, would, in a short time, everywhere prevail. A transformation of the Lutheran Church appeared to be silently taking place. It seemed as if there existed a general agreement in regard to the subject, and but little attention was paid to the opposition of such as still maintained different views. But now, in this our own day, even the authors and instigators of the "Platform" themselves confess, that they have been forced to resort to the expedient of publishing a platform, in consequence of the increasing prevalence of Old Lutheran doctrines and usages. This is a concession evidently in favor of the increase of stricter Lutheranism, whether it is merely a pretext

or not. But altogether certain it is, that with American Lutheranism a large portion are evidently dissatisfied, and among these more especially those who know what the true Old Lutheran Confession contains and supplies, and what the other has made of it. But this present condition cannot long continue. The one or other of these tendencies must ultimately prevail, whether or not a formal separation takes place between those at present united in the General Synod.

But just because we are in a state of transition, because we live at a time when many are only beginning to inquire, what is Lutheran, and what is not Lutheran, just on this account the wish that both sides may judge moderately and charitably seems so reasonable. That the majority on both sides mean it honestly is evident, though some individuals may, and doubtless do, incline to this or that side from caprice or selfishness, or that they may not lose their influence, or from some other motives of the kind. We know what influences are generally at work in the formation of a man's religious views. Let us only reflect what an influence a single teacher of theology exerts upon the whole Church, or upon entire generations. He trains his pupils according to his own views. They enter upon the active duties of the ministry, and operate, in the same spirit, on their congregations. And how difficult it is, to change views which we have long entertained and which have been adopted from partiality, especially if they affect the subject of religion, is well known. And yet we have latterly witnessed instances of this kind in the Lutheran Church in this country. But amidst the fermentation which is at present evidently in progress, and which is yet far from having come to a general result, it is necessary that one party should bear with the other. We can therefore, at the present moment, not perceive any justifiable reason for creating a division. No one can be expected to believe contrary to his convictions. But all may justly be required to bear in mind that

the Lutheran Church and doctrines were here before they were, and that whoever presumes to alter and deprive them of their character takes upon himself a great responsibility, before God and man.

We think none of our readers who, with a mind free from prejudice, have attentively read the statements contained in this book, will be disposed to accuse the author of having expressed his preference for the early faith of our Church, as such, without due and serious reflection, if he declares it, as his firm conviction, that the question here affects a return from the most dangerous neological views in theology to the ancient faith of the fathers. Still less can he be accused of a want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of the Lutheran doctrines and Church. He feels perfectly conscious of knowing them; and each repeated comparison he institutes between the Lutheran doctrines and other Confessions, tends only to confirm his conviction the more, that the mystery of the manifestation of God in Christ has nowhere, in the doctrines of any Church, been so clearly and fully comprehended as in those of the Lutheran. Let any one only abide by the plain and unsophisticated sense of the sacred Scriptures, to the absolute authority of which all must submit, or let him, in reducing the doctrine concerning salvation to a regular system, begin with the idea concerning the God-man, the unity of God and man in the *person of the Redeemer*, and the reconciliation between God and man through the work of redemption, upon which the entire system of Christianity rests, and pursue this idea, which runs through the whole, regularly and consistently, step by step, in its course through every article of faith, and he will find that the Lutheran doctrines will abide the test, that they had their origin in the innermost fountain of the knowledge of the gracious designs of God in the institution of the Church of Christ. Being founded on the rock of the Divine-human person of Jesus Christ, upon

this fundamental idea of the Christian religion, they could not accidentally become what they are, but must have followed, as the natural and unavoidable effect of this idea. They may be misapprehended and misconstrued; but refuted from the sacred Scriptures—never! It follows, of course, that, wherever properly understood and practised, they also must become the mother of every Christian virtue. For this even the fault-finders with our Augsburg Confession must themselves allow, that it cannot be denied, that whoever, with the unaltered doctrines of our Church, believes the Word of God, and conformably to it leads a Christian life, will, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, see salvation. Nay, all of them believe, that a Luther, a Paul Gerhard, an Arndt, a Spener, a Franke, a Muhlenberg, and a host of others, being orthodox Lutherans, were also true Christians, and, after death, met with a Christian's reward. Why then oppose this biblical Lutheran faith? Why not rather animate it, or endeavor to preserve its vivifying power, that it may not become a dead letter, but a living reality to each one of us individually, and to the Church collectively? This would be a noble and dignified work, and one which would preserve peace, increase love, strengthen the Church, and call down the blessing of Heaven on all around.

We are far from insinuating, as is sufficiently evident from what we have already said, that none but Lutheran doctrines contain anything Christian. We do not wish to undervalue other Confessions. But we recognize in our Lutheran doctrines a comparative excellency and superiority; and because we do this, we esteem it not only our *right*, but our solemn *duty*, to endeavor to preserve the Lutheran Confession in the Lutheran Church. We are ready to learn from and imitate the good of others, wherever it is possible for us to do so. We are even prepared to subscribe to the principle of evangelical liberty in things indifferent. But that invaluable treasure, our *Faith*, for which our fathers struggled, and suffered, and watched,

and prayed, we will not expose to the fluctuating spirit of the age, which has already gained an undue influence over the theology of our times, nor to the arbitrary disposal of individuals. Every alteration now effected in our Church doctrines is not a creative act, by which the Church would first be established. The old Confession, which is coexistent with the Church, is that act which binds and unites the Church, and every alteration makes the foundation of the Church insecure, and the consequence must be, that her religious life too must become unsettled and wavering.

This want of *respect for the historical basis* and that *connection between the present and past which has grown out of it*, is mainly the cause of the unfortunate condition of our time and Church. The error here in question will be, in the course of events, soon enough revenged on those who commit it. Their views, too, will prevail but for a little while, and they themselves will soon be forgotten. But this want of respect for the early faith of our Church also produces that most unfortunate inclination, which is ever ready to welcome everything of a novel and exciting character. Hence there are those who are continually experimenting in the Church, as if *the conversion of the world* was more easily effected by such attempts now than formerly. And what is there gained, in the end, with all this? The experience of the age in which we live points, for an answer, to that materialism, earthly-mindedness, egotism, and uprightness, which characterize our time, in spite of all our boasted progress; as in everything else, so also in religion.

We need not assure any one that we too are in favor of progress. But we would, at the same time, be guided by the principle, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Olden times have certainly had their faults. These we will endeavor to avoid. But truth remains forever new, and though it may for a time be obscured, it will emerge again like stars,

when the freshened wind shall have dispelled the sable clouds, and shine forth with resplendent beauty. In the same manner we now behold emerging many a bright old churchly gem from that dark obscurity to which they had been consigned. Among these may justly be reckoned the ancient doctrines of our Church. To become better acquainted with these, to know them more intimately in their truth, to be more united with Luther and other fathers in spirit and faith, is not a retrograde, but a forward, a progressive movement; it is a further advance in the kingdom, an increase of faith in the eternal *Word of God*. This is the one thing needful for our time, for Christianity, for theology, for our *Church*.

THE END.

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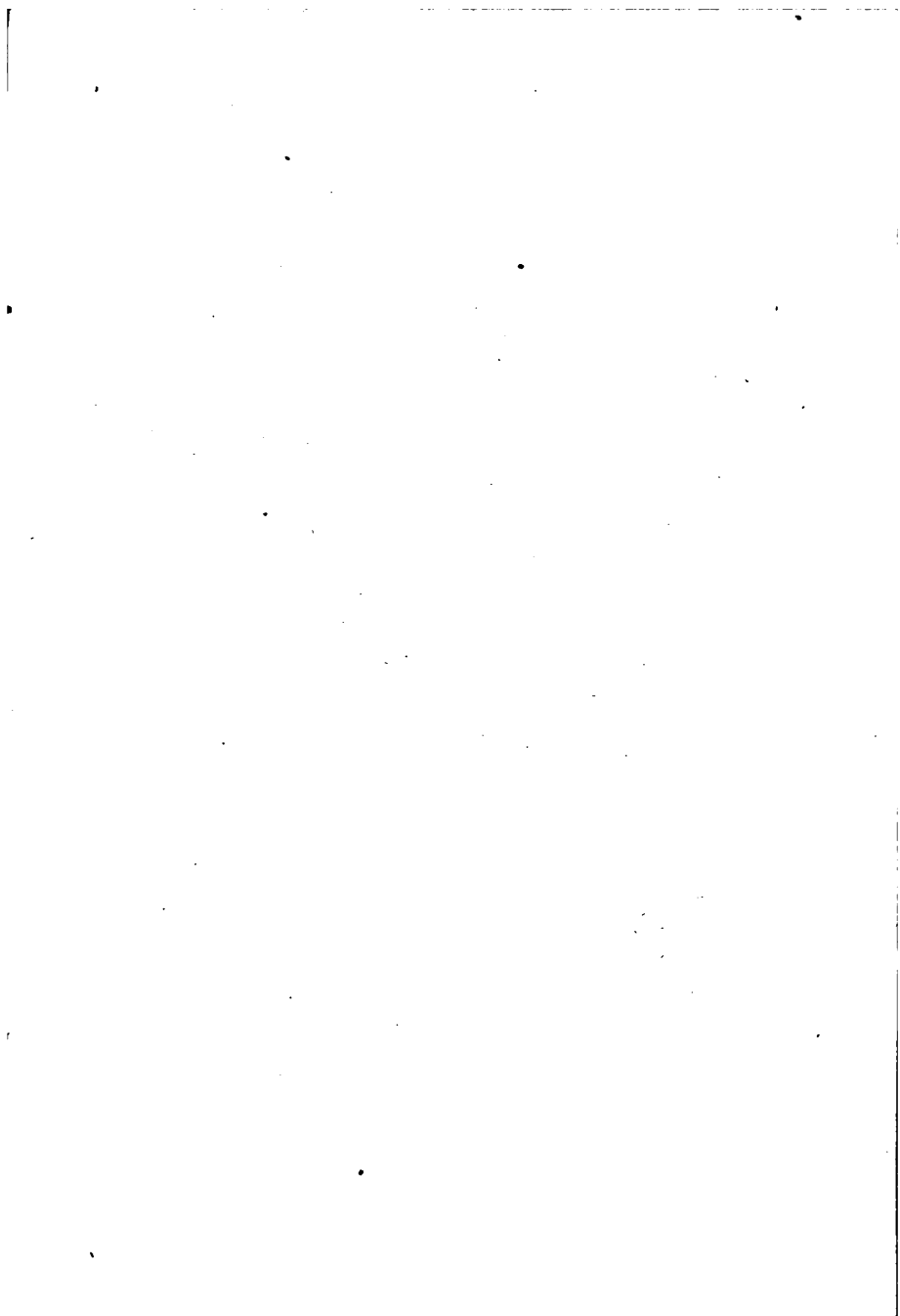
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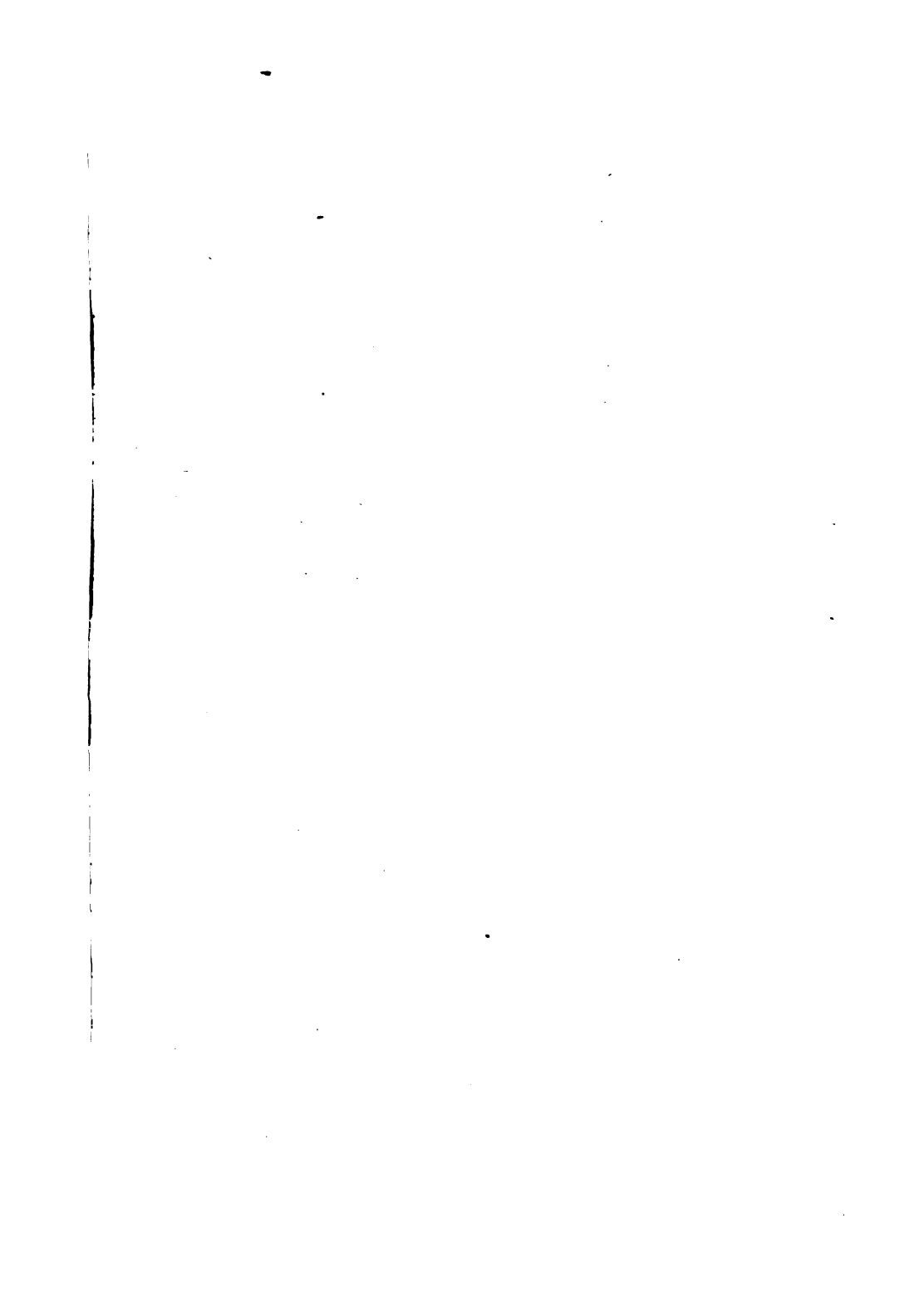
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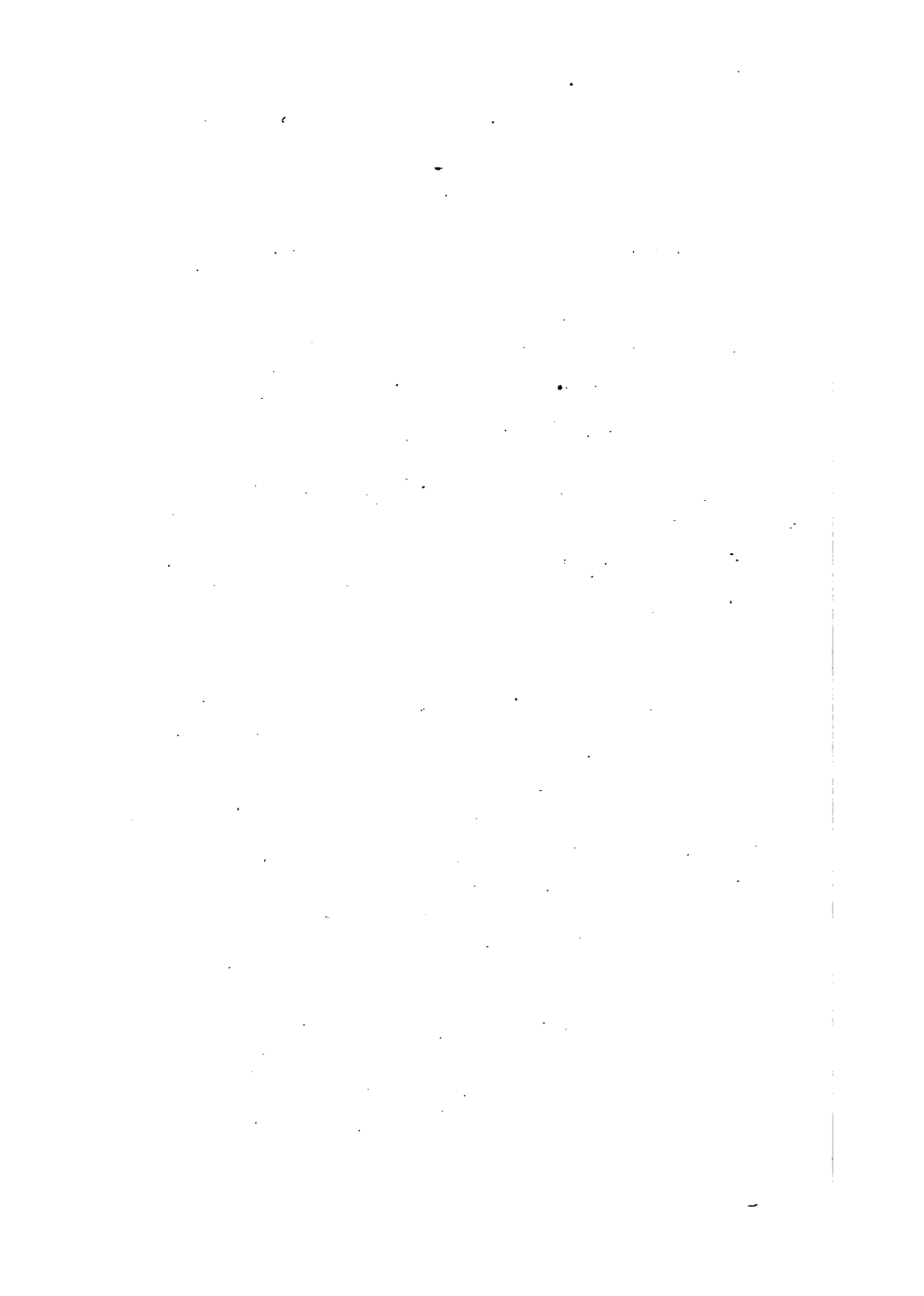
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